

CITY OF ST. CLAIR PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN 2023-2027

ADOPTED: JANUARY __, 2023



DRAFT



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1 COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION



INTRODUCTION

Recreation and open space play an important role in the lives of the residents of St. Clair. The most recent Parks and Recreation Plan was updated in 2018. It included both short and long-term goals, some of which were accomplished in the following years. Significant accomplishments realized since the last plan have included the installation of a new Imagination Station playground, development of the Wildlife Landing at Rotary Park, completion of the Broadside Dock Study, and the start of the Clinton Avenue Bike Path that is being funded with assistance through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

The purpose of the current St. Clair Parks and Recreation Plan is to guide recreation planning and development efforts of the Recreation Department over the next five-year planning period, through 2027. The updated plan is intended to meet state standards for community recreation planning, which is necessary to gain eligibility for grant programs.

WHAT THIS PLAN CONTAINS

This Plan follows the format suggested by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) in the *Guidelines for the Development of Community Parks and Recreation Plans (2021)*. This first chapter provides a description of the community, including a summary of both the social and physical characteristics of the area, as well as a discussion of current planning initiatives affecting the area. The Administrative Structure chapter includes a description of how parks and recreation services are administered in the City, including budget and funding information. The Recreation Inventory chapter describes the existing parks and recreation facilities in the community, including state and regional recreation amenities. The inventory also includes an accessibility assessment and an inspection of previously grant-assisted park projects. The Planning Process and Public Input chapter presents the input received from local officials, City staff, and residents - all of which helped in formulating the Goals and Objectives and Action Plan chapters. The Action Program chapter outlines an action plan with strategies for implementation. Following these main chapters is an appendix which includes various supporting documents gathered throughout the planning process, as well as the official resolutions and notices documenting the Plan's adoption by City Council.

PLANNING PROCESS

The process used to generate this five-year parks and recreation plan consisted of three phases: background studies, evaluation, and plan development. Background studies involved gathering and updating data from existing documents, plans, and surveys. The information is organized under the first three chapters: Community Description, Administrative Structure, and Recreation Inventory.

The second phase in the planning process included an evaluation and analysis of the gathered data and included garnering input from City officials and residents to determine recreation facility and program needs.

Finally, the last phase in the process involved plan development and adoption. Goals, objectives, and an action program were formulated based on the input gathered.

The City of St. Clair Parks and Recreation Master Plan was developed from input from members of the City Council, the Recreation Commission, the Harbor Commission, the Recreation Department, City officials, and the residents of St. Clair.

PLAN JURISDICTION: ST. CLAIR, MICHIGAN

The City of St. Clair is the jurisdiction of this plan. It is located in St. Clair County, Michigan, along the St. Clair River. The river has played a major role in the settlement, growth, and development of the county and the city. Early settlers used the river as a means of transportation. The City of St. Clair developed and prospered through waterborne commerce. Shipbuilding was a major source of employment during the early years until the 1920s when an increased reliance on rail and automobiles, as well as changing economic needs, caused a shift away from water transportation. Today, salt products and plastics remain as the City’s major employment source and source of tax revenue.

The St. Clair Recreation Department serves not only the recreation needs of the city’s residents, but also the needs of residents throughout neighboring communities. Therefore the service area considered throughout this document consists of the City of St. Clair, St. Clair Township, China Township, and East China Township.

POPULATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Since 2000, the population of St. Clair has seen a steady decline with the rate of decline greater than that of St. Clair County. The surrounding townships continue to see population growth. Projections provided by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) indicate St. Clair will continue to see a larger population decline than St. Clair County and the surrounding townships.

In addition to examining the number of people in St. Clair, it is important to understand the characteristics of the community. These qualities can suggest a need for certain types of recreational facilities or programs. The following tables present basic information about city residents based on the most current Census and SEMCOG data.

| TABLE 1-1: HISTORICAL POPULATION, CITY OF ST. CLAIR AND ENVIRONS | | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|
| Community | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 | % Change 2000-2020 |
| City of St. Clair | 5,116 | 5,802 | 5,485 | 5,464 | -5.8% |
| St. Clair Twp | 4,614 | 6,423 | 6,817 | 7,085 | 10.3% |
| China Twp | 2,644 | 3,340 | 3,551 | 3,509 | 5.1% |
| East China Twp | 3,216 | 3,630 | 3,788 | 3,704 | 2.0% |
| City + Townships | 15,590 | 19,195 | 19,641 | 19,762 | 3.0% |
| St. Clair County | 145,607 | 164,235 | 163,040 | 160,383 | -2.3% |
| Region | 4,521,177 | 4,833,493 | 4,704,743 | 4,830,489 | -0.1% |

Source: SEMCOG Community Profiles, 2022.

MAP 1-1: CITY OF ST. CLAIR AND SURROUNDING REGION

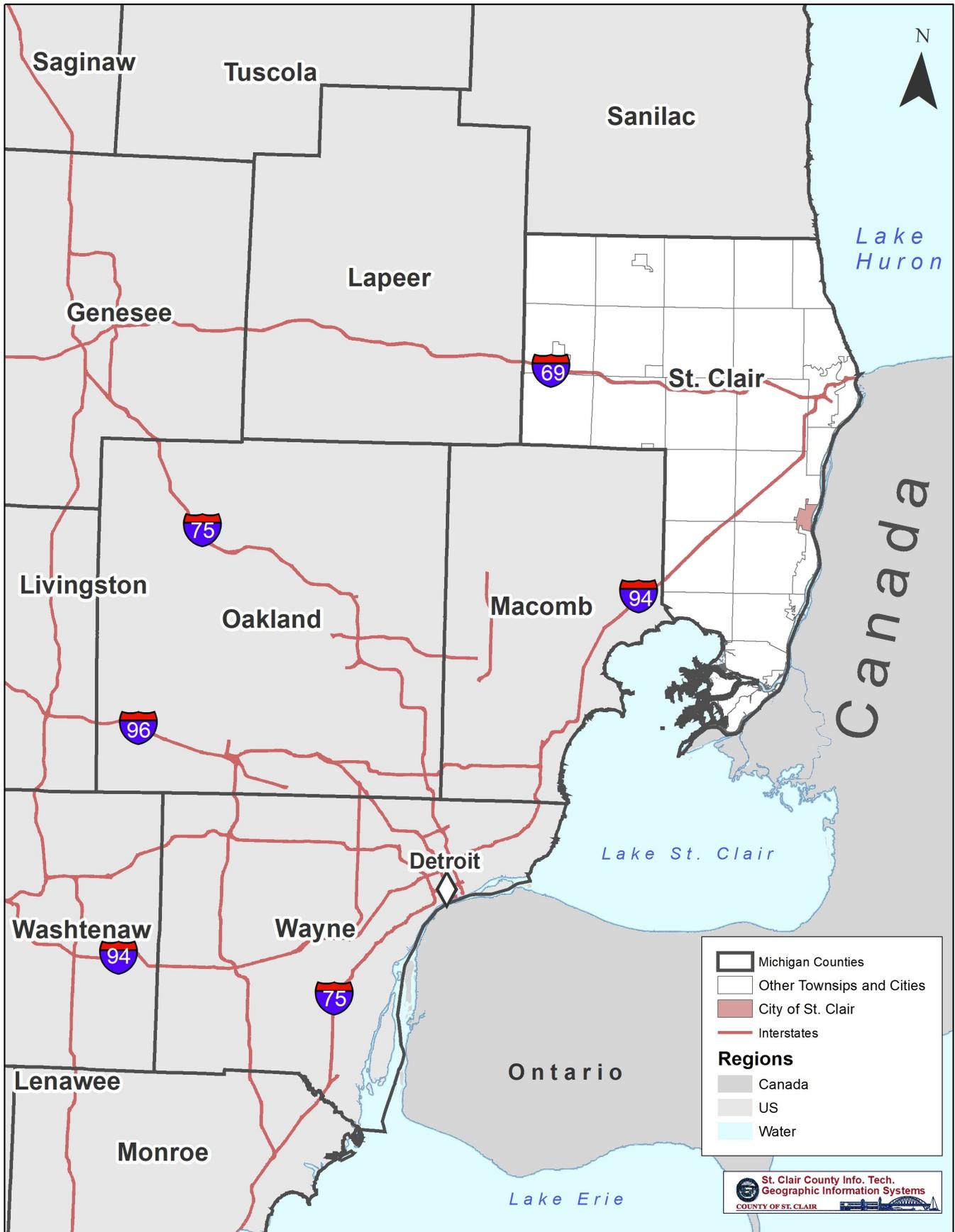


TABLE 1-2: POPULATION PROJECTIONS, CITY OF ST. CLAIR AND ENVIRONS

| Community | 2040 | 2045 | % Change 2040-2045 |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|
| City of St. Clair | 5,710 | 5,651 | -1.0% |
| St. Clair Twp | 7,240 | 7,277 | 0.5% |
| China Twp | 3,844 | 3,835 | -0.2% |
| East China Twp | 4,384 | 4,399 | 0.3% |
| St. Clair County | 166,922 | 166,185 | -0.4% |
| Region | 5,055,893 | 5,104,922 | 1.0% |

Source: SEMCOG Community Profiles, 2022.

TABLE 1-3: AGE CHARACTERISTICS, 2020-2045, CITY OF ST. CLAIR

| | 2020 | | 2045 | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| | Number | % | Number | % |
| Preschoolers, up to 5 years | 288 | 5.1% | 258 | 4.6% |
| School aged, 5-17 years | 749 | 13.4% | 798 | 14.1% |
| Young adults, 18-24 years | 408 | 7.3% | 369 | 6.5% |
| Families, 25-64 years | 2,992 | 53.5% | 2,725 | 48.2% |
| Seniors, 65 years and over | 1,160 | 20.7% | 1,501 | 26.6% |
| Total | 5,597 | | 5,651 | |

Source: SEMCOG Community Profiles, 2022.

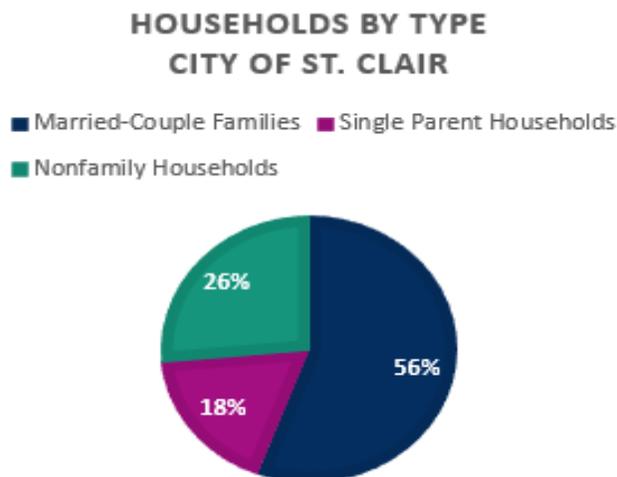
Children below the age of 18 make up about 19 percent of the total population in St. Clair. The proportion of children in the City is projected to increase by 19 to represent about 19% percent of the total population in 2045. Seniors will be the fastest growing segment of the population through 2045. The proportion of the population over 65 years of age is projected to increase by 341 in St. Clair, to represent an increase in the proportion of seniors in the City from 21 to 27 percent.

Approximately 74 percent of the City's population is living in family households and most of these are married-couple families (56%). The remainder of the City's population is made up of non-family households (26%). Non-family households are households which comprise a group of unrelated persons or one person living alone. The City has attracted more family households than non-family households since the last plan update, which is a deviation from the trend in the county towards more non-family households. Approximately 32 percent of the City's households have children under 18 years and 30 percent of households have seniors 65 years or older.

According to the U.S. Census, the 2020 median household income was \$82,674 for St. Clair residents, which is an 83 percent increase between 2010 and 2020. St. Clair has experienced a greater growth rate to its income than St. Clair County (20%) and the State of Michigan (22%).

Residents of St. Clair are employed in a range of occupations with sales and office, and service occupations being the largest categories.

FIGURE 1-1: HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE, CITY OF ST. CLAIR



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

TABLE 1-4: HOUSEHOLDS IN THE CITY OF ST. CLAIR, 2020

| Households | 2020 | |
|-----------------------------|--------|------|
| | Number | % |
| Total Households | 2,114 | 100% |
| Households with children | 678 | 32% |
| Households without children | 1,436 | 68% |
| Households with seniors 65+ | 632 | 30% |
| Households without seniors | 1,482 | 70% |

Source: SEMCOG Community Profiles, 2022.

HOUSING AND BUILDING TRENDS

The number of housing units in St. Clair has decreased from 2,689 in 2010 to 2,249 in 2020. The housing stock consists of single-family homes (76%), apartments (16%), and single-family attached or duplex units (8%). The median house value for the City in 2020 was \$162,500, up from \$158,700 in 2010. The majority of the housing units were built before 1960 (55%).

Table 1-6 shows there have been a relatively low number of issued building permits in the city except for a permit spike in 2019.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Land use patterns in existence today are largely the result of the early platting of St. Clair. The oldest section of St. Clair is bounded by the St. Clair River to the east and the Pine River to the south. The City generally developed north and south of this area. Settlement can be traced back to its desirable location on the St. Clair River, which was the means of transportation in and out of the City.

Today, the predominant land use in St. Clair is residential with single-family residential land uses at 39 percent. Multi-family homes make up another 3 percent. Industrial, commercial, and institutional land uses amount to 20 percent of the City’s land area. Finally, outdoor recreation amounts to 8 percent.

Recreation and parks are important catalysts for City growth. Combined with arts, culture, and preserving history, recreation programming, and quality parks are essential features that can attract new residents.

NATURAL FEATURES

The natural features of the City of St. Clair have played a major role in influencing and attracting growth and development in the area. Like much of Michigan’s southern lower peninsula, the city’s

TABLE 1-5: HOUSING UNITS IN THE CITY OF ST. CLAIR, 2000-2020

| Housing Type | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 | Change 2010-2020 |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Single-Family Detached | 1,793 | 1,837 | 1,701 | -136 |
| Duplex | 105 | 155 | 54 | -101 |
| Townhouse/Attached Condo | 64 | 133 | 128 | -5 |
| Multi-Unit Apartment | 475 | 551 | 366 | -185 |
| Mobile Home/Manufactured Housing | 17 | 13 | 0 | -13 |
| Total | 2,454 | 2,689 | 2,249 | -440 |

Source: US Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

TABLE 1-6: BUILDING PERMITS, CITY OF ST. CLAIR, 2000-2021

| Year | Single Family | Two Family | Attach Condo | Multi Family | Total Units | Total Demos | Net Total |
|---------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 2000 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 6 |
| 2001 | 9 | 14 | 10 | 5 | 38 | 1 | 37 |
| 2002 | 4 | 4 | 33 | 0 | 41 | 2 | 39 |
| 2003 | 7 | 0 | 22 | 0 | 29 | 0 | 29 |
| 2004 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 1 | 18 |
| 2005 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 3 | 11 |
| 2006 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| 2007 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2008 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2009 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2010 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2011 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 2012 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 2013 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2014 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| 2015 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 2016 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| 2017 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 2018 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| 2019 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 108 | 111 | 0 | 111 |
| 2020 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 2021 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Totals | 88 | 18 | 65 | 113 | 284 | 11 | 273 |

Source: SEMCOG Community Profiles, 2022.

MAP 1-2: LAND USE

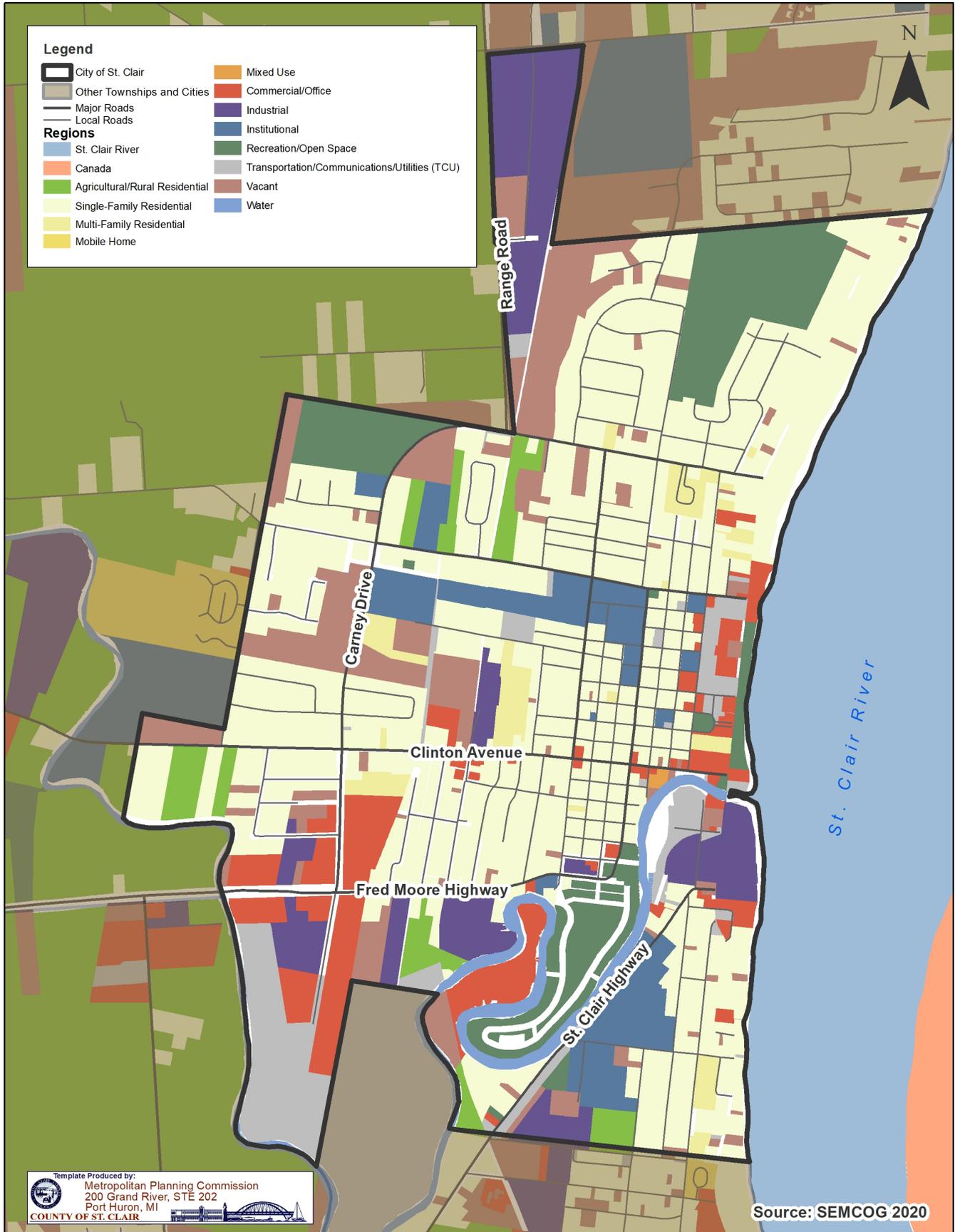


TABLE 1-7: CITY OF ST. CLAIR 2020 LAND USE ACREAGE

| | Acres | Percent |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| Agricultural/Rural Residential | 68.5 | 4% |
| Single-Family Residential | 741.5 | 39% |
| Multi-Family Residential | 64.6 | 3% |
| Commercial | 83.2 | 4% |
| Industrial | 141.6 | 8% |
| Government/Institutional | 147.7 | 8% |
| Park, Recreation, and Open Space | 147.6 | 8% |
| Transportation, Communication, and Utility | 90.9 | 5% |
| Water | 40 | 2% |
| Vacant | 263.5 | 14% |
| Not Parceled | 92.3 | 5% |
| Total | 1,881 | 100% |

Source: SEMCOG Community Profiles, 2022.

landscape was formed through glacial action. The glacier's movement shaped the topography and created many different types of soils. Plant communities, in turn, developed in response to soil conditions.

TOPOGRAPHY

St. Clair is located in an area which is characterized by relatively flat to gently undulating topography. The County's land surface consists of a broad, clay-based glacial lake plain with several end moraines that are one to three miles wide and which have been reshaped by water and runoff. Elevations throughout the City range from approximately 580 feet to 605 feet above sea level. The highest natural point is located northwest of the City and the lowest area is located along the St. Clair River shoreline. The land is gently sloping from the northwest to the southeast.

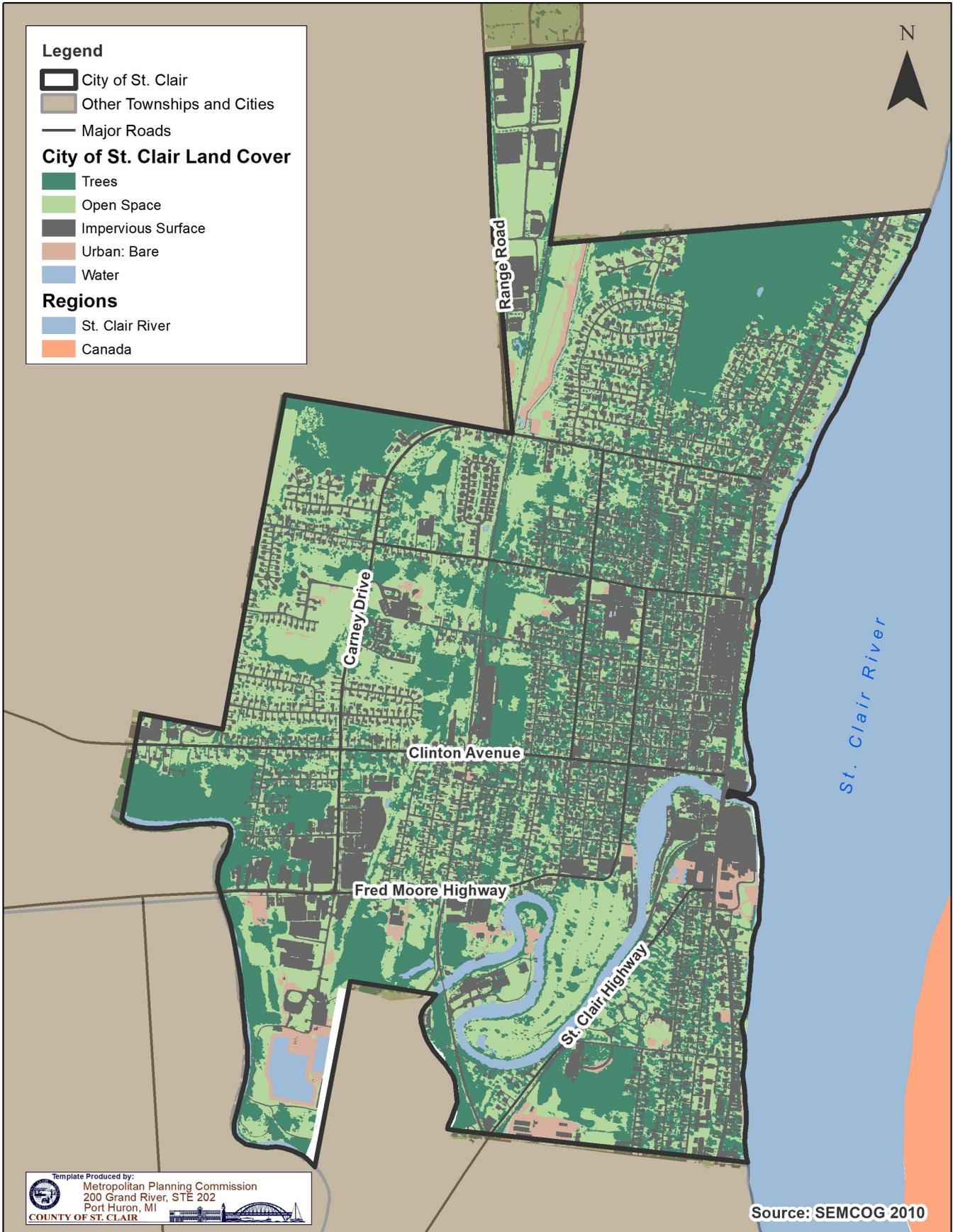
SOILS AND VEGETATION

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the soil types found in the City are composed of clays and loamy sand over clay which exhibit poor drainage. Old beach ridges and old dunes run parallel to the Lake Huron and the St. Clair River shores. Evidence of this type of terrain can be seen at Greig Park.

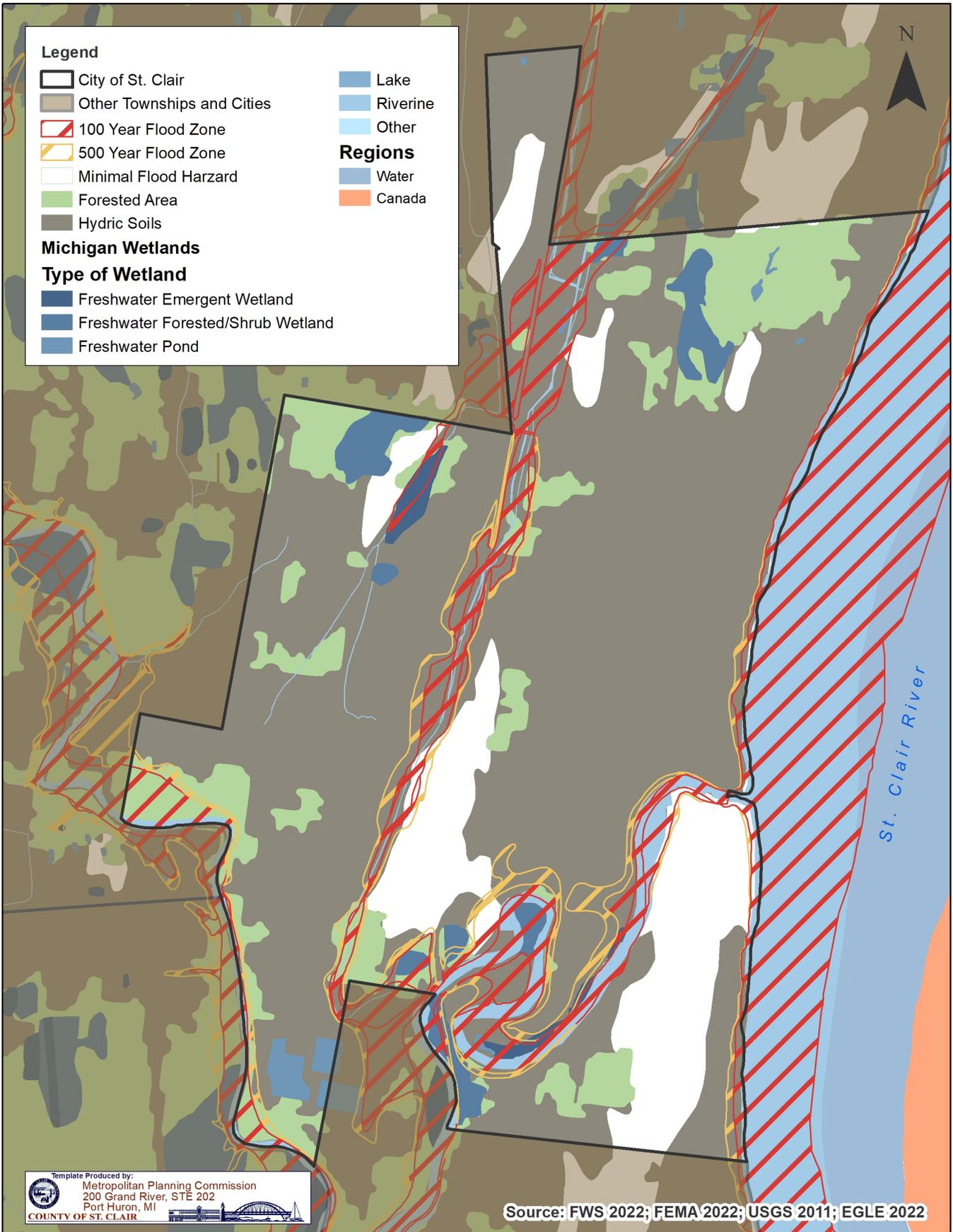
WATER RESOURCES

The most important water feature of the community is the St. Clair River. It extends from Lake Huron to Lake St. Clair for a distance of 34.3 miles. The River provides fishing opportunities for anglers and a great location for sailboarders when the winds are strong. It is lined by some parkland and older buildings which provide a pleasant place for people to stroll and enjoy a close look at Great Lake freighters that pass along the waterway. The Pine River, a tributary of the St. Clair River, also runs through the City of St. Clair and includes the largest watershed fully contained within St. Clair County (126,110 acres).

MAP 1-3: LAND COVER



MAP 1-4: HYDRIC SOILS, WETLANDS, AND FLOOD ZONES



FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Both the St. Clair and Pine Rivers are good fishing areas. They provide fishing opportunities for brown trout, lake trout, steelhead, salmon, smelt, walleye, perch, bass, pike, muskellunge, carp, catfish, and pan fish. These open waters and varied ecosystems support a wide variety of wildlife resources. Wildlife species in St. Clair County include whitetail deer, cottontail rabbit, fox squirrel, gray squirrel, raccoon, skunk, fox, coyote, beaver, muskrat, badger, opossum, pheasant, quail, ruffed grouse, crow, woodcock, wild turkey, and others. The Great Lakes Basin is also a major flyway for thousands of North American waterfowl and bird species. Bird watching is an extremely popular recreational activity in St. Clair County.

PLANNING INITIATIVES

While change is inevitable and growth in both population and development will occur, the City of St. Clair is committed to managing that growth to enhance recreation opportunities and overall quality of life for all residents. A number of planning initiatives related to parks and recreation have taken place in the city and the region that have relevance to the current plan. They include:

- ◆ City of St. Clair Master Plan (2021)
- ◆ St. Clair County Master Recreation Plan 2022-2026
- ◆ St. Clair County Trails Plan (2019)
- ◆ M-29 Corridor Analysis
- ◆ Downtown Vision Plan
- ◆ City Pool Feasibility Studies

CITY OF ST. CLAIR MASTER PLAN

The City of St. Clair Master Plan was updated and adopted in 2021. The plan includes a Parks, Recreation, History, and Culture chapter that integrated the goals and objectives of the previous Parks and Recreation Plan to ensure synergy between the two planning documents. The master plan also highlights the city's thriving arts, culture, and history community and provides an overview of the recreational amenities throughout the city.

ST. CLAIR COUNTY MASTER RECREATION PLAN 2022-2026

The County's Master Recreation Plan has identified several goals and objectives that relate to parks, trails, and recreation facilities and services in the city. They include:

- ◆ Continue to distribute 25 percent of the annual millage revenues to local units of government for planning, maintenance, and development of parks and recreation facilities and programs;
- ◆ Maintain grant programs for local units of government to assist in the acquisition of small parcels for waterfront preservation, skate parks, dog parks, trails, and canoe/kayak launches;
- ◆ Connect the Bridge to Bay Trail to the Macomb Orchard Trail along Fred Moore Highway as part of the statewide Great Lake to Lake Trail;
- ◆ Work with partners to implement the St. Clair County Trails Plan. Assist local communities in filling identified gaps in the Bridge to Bay Trail;
- ◆ Work with transportation agencies to provide non-motorized access to trail, parks, and greenways consistent with local, county, and regional non-motorized plans; and
- ◆ Continue to develop and promote the Blueways of St. Clair and partner with local units of government to provide additional canoe and kayak launches along the Blueways.



ST. CLAIR COUNTY TRAILS PLAN

St. Clair County, along with the Community Foundation of St. Clair County and numerous local and regional partners, developed an updated countywide trails plan in 2019 that identifies existing gaps in countywide non-motorized trail networks, identifies preferred alternatives to eliminate those gaps, and prioritizes the timing and sequencing for completing needed connections. The overarching goal is to complete the Bridge to Bay Trail and Wadhams to Avoca trail networks, which includes connecting to the Macomb Orchard Trail and the Great Lake-to-Lake Trail Route #1, which runs from South Haven in the western part of the state to Port Huron in the eastern part of the state. More information about this plan, including the routes identified in the City of St. Clair can be found in Chapter 3.

St. Clair County also works at promoting the Blueways of St. Clair. The Pine River Paddle in the City is one of the identified routes. This Blueway extends from the St. Clair Municipal Marina to Turtle Beach, a picnic area located south of Fred Moore Highway on the BP property.

Locally, the City of St. Clair had formulated a bicycle plan in 1998 which recommended an interconnected network of bicycle routes and design treatments from separate multi-use pathways to bike and wide curb lanes.

CITY OF ST. CLAIR DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN

Local initiatives have included a downtown development plan prepared by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) in 2007. The plan includes several improvement projects affecting parks and recreation in St. Clair. Some of the priorities of the plan include beautification, walkability, and connectivity:

- ◆ Realignment and improvement of Fred Moore Highway and Riverside Avenue;
- ◆ Addition of safe pedestrian crossings;
- ◆ Street tree plantings;
- ◆ Cohesive streetscape enhancement with uniform design elements – hanging baskets, banners, lights, paving;
- ◆ Riverview Plaza renovation; and
- ◆ Connections to the Pine River and the natural area on the Dome Petroleum Property.

M-29 CORRIDOR ANALYSIS

In the fall of 2017, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) began working with an engineering consultant to study the M-29 corridor through the City of St. Clair to assess how the road functions, identify safety concerns, and identify a preferred alternative for enhancing pedestrian safety and mobility in connecting Palmer Park to the downtown plaza. These safety enhancements are more critical than ever as the iconic St. Clair Inn is being redeveloped into a mixed-use destination hotel. This study will look at a variety of treatments, including new pedestrian crossings, pedestrian-activated crossing lights, and restriping M-29 to convert it from four lanes to three lanes - also known as a “road diet.”

The M-29 corridor has been studied carefully in past years, including during the City’s Master Plan update in 2011 and a corridor study that was prepared in 2010, which called for a divided boulevard section with on-street parallel parking and eight-foot sidewalks along both sides of the street.

MUNICIPAL POOL FEASIBILITY STUDIES

In 2006 and 2007, the City has explored the feasibility of replacing the existing City pool with an updated aquatic facility including enhanced features, such as zero depth entry, waterslide, and other features. Scenarios were examined for renovating the existing pool, replacing and enhancing the pool at the same location, and a new aquatic facility which could be built at Greig Park. The studies included an examination of the target market, financial projections, and a potential development program with rough costs.

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CHAPTER 2 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE





INTRODUCTION

The St. Clair City Council is the governing elected body which has authority over all City operations including parks, recreation, municipal golf course, and the harbor.

In 1975, the Council created a Recreation Department and an Advisory Recreation Commission under the authority of P.A. 156 of 1917. In 2008, it was officially renamed by the City Council to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Parks and Recreation Commission is a seven-person advisory group which is responsible for policy matters and physical development. It meets on a monthly basis.

ADMINISTRATION

The Recreation Department is responsible for the overall planning and management of the City's recreational services. The Recreation Director is responsible for the development, planning, and programming of parks and recreation facilities. The Director serves as the liaison between the Recreation Commission and City Council. The Director reports to the City Superintendent. Figure 2-1 shows the organizational chart for parks and recreational services in the City of St. Clair.

Park maintenance functions are carried out through the Parks Division of the Department of Public Services.

FUNDING AND BUDGET

The Recreation Department is supported by the City's general fund and by user fees, grants, and donations. A summary of current year revenues and expenditures is presented in Table 2-1.

| TABLE 2-1: CITY OF ST. CLAIR RECREATION BUDGET SUMMARY, 2022-2023 | |
|--|------------------|
| Revenues - Recreation | |
| County Contribution | \$25,000 |
| Recreation Class Fees | \$52,500 |
| Swimming Pool Fees | \$15,000 |
| Tots Program Fees | \$27,000 |
| Community Center Rental | \$1,000 |
| Pavilion Rental | \$750 |
| Contributions – Private | \$7,500 |
| Contributions – Rec Concerts | \$8,000 |
| Transfers In/Fund 101 | \$90,000 |
| Total Operating Revenues | \$226,750 |
| Expenses – Recreation | |
| Wages & benefits | \$118,610 |
| Operating Supplies | \$11,000 |
| Contractual Services | \$37,500 |
| Travel | \$600 |
| Printing & Publishing | \$4,000 |
| Education & Training | \$500 |
| Membership & Dues | \$500 |
| Total Recreation | \$172,710 |
| Expenses – Swimming Pool | |
| Wages & Benefits | \$32,690 |
| Operating Supplies | \$3,500 |
| Contractual Services | \$3,500 |
| Liability/Property Insurance | \$350 |
| Public Utilities | \$6,500 |
| Repair & Maintenance | \$7,500 |
| Total Swimming Pool | \$54,040 |
| | |
| Total Expenses | \$363,500 |

St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Millage

The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) has a countywide millage for parks and recreation in St. Clair County. PARC dedicates 75% of the millage revenues to parks and recreation facilities that serve a countywide audience. PARC distributes the remaining 25% of the County Parks and Recreation Millage revenues to local units of government to enhance or expand local parks and recreation programs and facilities. Since 1995, the amount of money distributed to local communities has totaled more than \$12.6 million. This distribution has had a positive impact on the delivery of local parks and recreation services in every community in St. Clair County. The amount of local distribution is based on the number of residents living in each municipality or township. From 1995 to 2022, a total of \$621,076.26 has been distributed to the City of St. Clair for parks and recreation activities.

In order to receive these funds, communities must submit an annual report and show evidence of “maintenance of effort” to assure the funding is used to expand opportunities rather than to supplant existing local funding. In effect, local units of government must document that they have maintained their local financial support for parks and recreation services at a level equal to or greater than the amount they spent prior to the 1994 millage election.

VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The City of St. Clair Recreation Department recognizes the importance of developing successful long-term and strategic relationships in the community. Current partnerships include: government agencies (townships, County, and State), area recreation departments, private and public schools, volunteers, service clubs, professional organizations (Michigan Recreation and Parks Association), community groups, and private businesses.

The East China School District athletic fields, game courts, and indoor facilities including the pool, gymnasiums, and classrooms are used for programming by the Recreation Department through a facility-use agreement in effect since 2005. The agreement allows the Recreation Department to use the facilities in coordination with the schools schedule of activities. Volunteer parent organizations run some of the youth sports. They include the American Youth Soccer organization (AYSO), St. Clair Little League, St. Clair Junior Football, and Blue Water Swim Club. These organizations use the facilities offered by the City and the schools.

Private businesses contribute to community, recreation, and special event programs through sponsorships and donations. Service clubs and community groups also play an active role in supporting parks and recreation. They include:

Civic Organizations:

- Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
- Beautification Committee

Local Service Clubs:

- Community Foundation of St. Clair County
- Lions Club
- Boy/Girl Scouts
- Rotary Club of St. Clair

- National Honor Society
- St. Clair High School Student Council
- St. Clair Women’s League
- St. Clair Chamber of Commerce
- St. Clair Art Association
- St. Clair County ARC
- St. Clair County Council on Aging
- St. Clair Garden Club

GRANT ASSISTED PROJECTS

Since 1989, the City of St. Clair has been awarded five Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) grants. Grant funding from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund has been instrumental in developing recreation facilities on park properties. Table 2-2 presents a description of all MDNR grants received.

In addition to MDNR and MNRTF grants, the City has also received funding assistance from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The City received a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant in the amount of \$437,115 through the Michigan Department of Transportation in 2020 to develop the Clinton Avenue Bikeway. The matching funds in the amount

TABLE 2-2: MDNR GRANT ASSISTED PROJECTS IN THE CITY OF ST. CLAIR

| Grant Number | Description | Grant Amount | Current Use/Description |
|------------------------------|---|--------------|--|
| 2016 MNRTF TF-16-0154 | Palmer Park: Removal and replacement of the Palmer Park Boardwalk along the St. Clair River. | \$225,000 | Work on removal and replacement of the Boardwalk will begin in 2018. |
| 2004 MNRTF TF04-168 | Greig Park: Property acquisition of 7-acre adjacent wooded property | \$100,000 | The expanded parkland has been developed as a skate-bike park. |
| 1993 MNRTF 26-01544TF | Klecha Park: Accessibility improvements; safety surface for playground/pavilion area, picnic tables, bathroom, parking, and handicap signage. | \$11,444 | The park features developed with these funds are in good condition. |
| 1992 BF92-046 | Greig Park: Development of picnic pavilion with picnic tables, grills, sand volleyball, free play area, environmental kiosks, natural ice rink, and warming shelters. | \$386,720 | The ice rink has been replaced with a roller hockey rink; the park features developed with these funds have been maintained in good condition. |
| 1989 BF89-190 | Greig Park: Development of a nature and fitness trail, cross-country ski trails, signage, and landscaping. | \$219,724 | The park features developed with these funds have been maintained in good condition. |

of \$291,410 includes funding assistance through the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation and the Community Foundation of St. Clair County. The trail will be constructed in 2023.

ST. CLAIR BOAT HARBOR

The St. Clair Boat Harbor - located on the St. Clair River, at the mouth of the Pine River - is a 107-slip harbor and campground with electric, water, and a pump-out station. Boat slips are available to seasonal boaters as well as transients. There are 54 transient boat slips and 53 seasonal boat slips, as well as ten personal watercraft docks. The Harbor has floating wood docks and a staff of dock attendants to service boaters. The Harbor is open from April 1 through October 15. The fuel dock offers boaters gas, diesel, pump outs, and a limited supply of oil and other boating needs.

The Harbor also has an ADA-accessible canoe/kayak launch ramp, as well as canoe and kayak rentals onsite. There is also a daily launch ramp and fish cleaning station for anglers. The Harbor is a short walk to many local restaurants and shops. A free shuttle is also available to take people into downtown.

The Harbor features nine campsites with power and water, as well as four covered pavilions that are used for boater and community events. It also hosts many local events, such as the Special Olympics Polar Plunge, Marble Eye Fishing Contest, model boat races, Wertz Warriors, RiverFest Boat Races, and the Mardi Gras party for residents and boaters.



Budget

Total operating revenue for 2022-2023 was \$727,400 and total operating expense was at \$818,565.

Dredging

Due to the high water levels, the St. Clair Boat Harbor has not dredged since 2011. The Harbor does have a dredge plan that supports obtaining grants or other funding that becomes available for harbor dredging or other safety improvements. This includes documentation that the dredge spoils will be deposited within a United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Confined Disposal Facility (CDF). Due to high water, it is not anticipated that dredging will be required in the near future.

Marketing/Partnerships

The St. Clair Boat Harbor is marketed online via the city's website, along with a standalone website at <http://stclairboatharbor.com/>, which includes information on rates/fees, a calendar of events, information for visitors, and contact information. Additionally, the Boat Harbor is featured on its own page through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Pure Michigan site, <http://www.michigan.org/property/st-clair-boat-harbor>.

The Harbor also has a standalone Facebook page with over 1,900 followers. The Facebook page includes event information, rate/fees, photos and videos, and other general information.

All of the Harbor's community functions are sponsored or partnered with a local business or community group, including Cargill, Foster Oil, River Credit Union, Burger King, State Farm Insurance, Murphy Inn, Nieman's Family Markets, AAA, the River Crab, Grace Performance, Wertz Warriors, the Special Olympics, and SC Landscape and Irrigation.

Annual Maintenance

Each year, approximately \$25,000 is budgeted for repair and maintenance. Each season varies as far as what needs are addressed. Examples include dock repair due to ice damage, seawall maintenance, driveway and boat launch sealcoating.

Right-Sizing of Harbor

The St. Clair Boat Harbor meets the demand of the boating public. Seasonal wells fill up each year with a small number of boats on a wait list. Transient boaters find the Harbor is a popular destination that is full on weekends in June through September. There is typically a wait list for popular weekends such as RiverFest, the Art Fair, and holidays. Dockage is available throughout the weekdays and to boaters who use the MDNR Reservation system and reserve up to six months in advance. The Harbor is bordered by a private marina to the south and Biewer Lumber to the east. Any expansion, if needed, would have to be on the west bank of the River by Pine Shores Golf Course.

ADA Accessibility

Most of the amenities at the Harbor are ADA-accessible including an ADA-accessible canoe/kayak launch, accessible restrooms, an accessible parking lot, and transportation that meets ADA requirements. The floating docks are accessible by ramps.



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CHAPTER 3
RECREATION INVENTORY



INTRODUCTION

The residents of the City of St. Clair are able to take advantage of a variety of recreational resources at the regional, county, and local levels, as well as through privately-owned facilities. This chapter describes those resources.

LOCAL PARKS AND RECREATION

CITY PARKS AND FACILITIES

The City operates over 150 acres of parks, bicycle/walking paths, a community center, a public outdoor pool, a municipal golf course, and a boat harbor. St. Clair includes four community parks: Greig, Klecha, Palmer, and Legacy parks. Greig Park, located on Carney Drive, includes both active and passive activities. Klecha Park, on the south part of the City, includes the former Little League ball fields. Palmer Park is a passive riverfront park on the St. Clair River. Legacy Park, on Fred Moore Highway, is the current home of the Little League ball fields and has access to the Pine River. Legacy Park has an additional 26 acres of undeveloped parkland. The City owns 1.7 acres of undeveloped parkland along the Pine River.

In addition to those amenities, the City owns and maintains three smaller pocket parks: Diamond Point, Patrick Sinclair, and Rotary Club Park, which include landscaped and seating areas. The City also maintains multi-use paths along Carney Drive, Fred Moore Highway, and a segment connection to St. Clair Middle School.

The Community Center includes a multi-purpose room used for senior and youth programs, and is available for public/private use. The Historical Museum, located on the upper floor, occupies most of the building for display and storage. An annex and customs house is also on-site. The outdoor pool provides swim lessons, competitive and synchronized team, open, and family swim for City residents during the summer. Year-round aquatic programs are offered by the Recreation Department at the school's indoor pool.

Accessibility Evaluation

In accordance with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Guidelines for Recreation Plans, an accessibility evaluation was completed for each park within the City. The evaluation was conducted by planners from the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission.

Each City facility was compared to the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and given a ranking from 1-5, where:

- 1 = none of the site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- 2 = some site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- 3 = most site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- 4 = all site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, and
- 5 = the facility meets the Principles of Universal Design

MAP 3-1: COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN ST. CLAIR



TABLE 3-1: CITY OF ST. CLAIR FACILITIES

| GREIG PARK | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Acreage | 36.5 acres |
| Accessibility Rating | 3 |
| Amenities | “Imagination Station” play structure, sand volleyball, roller hockey rink, basketball courts, picnic shelter, paved pathways, nature trails, skate-bike park, BMX pump track, portable restroom, artwork |

| KLECHA PARK | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Acreage | 4.9 acres |
| Accessibility Rating | 3 |
| Amenities | 2 ball fields, playground, restrooms, picnic pavilion, paved pathway |

| PALMER PARK | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Acreage | 5.9 acres |
| Accessibility Rating | 4 |
| Amenities | World’s longest freshwater boardwalk, paved pathway, art sculptures, seating areas, freighter watching, downtown access |

| LEGACY PARK | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Acreage | 52 acres |
| Accessibility Rating | 3 |
| Amenities | 9 ball fields, 4 picnic shelters, concession/fieldhouse, pine river access, permanent restroom facilities, 26 acres undeveloped |

TABLE 3-1: CITY OF ST. CLAIR FACILITIES (CONTINUED)

| ST. CLAIR BOAT HARBOR | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Acreage | 6 acres |
| Accessibility Rating | 3 |
| Amenities | 120 boat slips, boat launch, ADA-accessible canoe/kayak launch, canoe/kayak rentals, fish cleaning station, restrooms, picnic shelter, camping, water/electric/pump out station |

| PINE SHORES GOLF COURSE | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Acreage | 51 acres |
| Accessibility Rating | 3 |
| Amenities | 9 hole golf course, clubhouse facility |

| DIAMOND POINTE PARK | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Acreage | 0.7 acre |
| Accessibility Rating | 1 |
| Amenities | Landscaped area, art sculpture |

| PATRICK SINCLAIR PARK | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Acreage | 0.6 acre |
| Accessibility Rating | 2 |
| Amenities | Landscaped area, walkway, art sculptures, picnic table, seating areas |

| ROTARY CENTENNIAL PARK | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Acreage | 6 acres |
| Accessibility Rating | 0.3 acre |
| Amenities | Boardwalk, boat mooring on Pine River, Pine River access, picnic tables and grills, ADA-accessible fishing pier, art sculptures |

TABLE 3-1: CITY OF ST. CLAIR FACILITIES (CONTINUED)

| PINE RIVER ACCESS | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Acreage | 0.7 acre |
| Accessibility Rating | 1.2 acres |
| Amenities | Undeveloped Pine River Access |

| PALMER/OAKLAND ACCESS | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Acreage | 0.1 acre |
| Accessibility Rating | 1 |
| Amenities | Undeveloped, St. Clair River access, park bench, freighter watching |

| ST. CLAIR COMMUNITY CENTER AND HISTORICAL MUSEUM | |
|---|---|
| Acreage | 0.1 acre |
| Accessibility Rating | 3 |
| Amenities | Landscaped area, walkway, art sculptures, picnic table, seating areas |

| ST. CLAIR COMMUNITY POOL | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Acreage | 0.7 acre |
| Accessibility Rating | 3 |
| Amenities | Public outdoor pool, restrooms |

ADJACENT TOWNSHIP PARKS

St. Clair Township includes a five-acre park with active and passive areas, as well as boat and fishing access.

Four parks are located in China Township: Indian Trail Road Park, which includes sports fields and nature trails; Administration Park, which includes a community center with sports fields and more; the King Road/Belle River park, which includes a new ADA-accessible canoe and kayak launch; and the Recor Road park.

East China Township has a total of six parks and recreation facilities. Four of these are neighborhood parks including fishing access, picnic areas, and play equipment. East China Park includes a large number of sports fields and other facilities, while the Township Administrative Building is the location for a variety of recreation programs. In addition, East China Stadium is a school-owned property where football programs take place.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

The East China School District includes a High School and Middle School located on the outskirts of the City. Two public elementary schools and other private or parochial schools are located within St. Clair. These schools provide recreation facilities for City residents and include playgrounds, athletic fields, open space, and indoor facilities for both students and residents.

PRIVATE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Private recreational facilities in St. Clair include a marina, a bowling alley, the 3.2-mile St. Clair Nature Trail along the Pine River, and the Alice W. Moore Woods Nature Sanctuary.

ADJACENT TOWNSHIP PARKS

TABLE 3-2: CHINA TOWNSHIP

| Facility | Acreage | Amenities |
|----------------------------|---------|---|
| Indian Trail Road Site | 62 | Playground, ballfields, soccer fields, restrooms |
| Neiman Park | 3.5 | Playground, ballfields, soccer fields, basketball courts, picnic areas, community center, horseshoe pits, restrooms |
| King Road/Belle River Site | 14 | Playground, river access, fishing access, trails, picnic areas, fire pit, restrooms |
| Recor Road Site | 5.3 | Undeveloped |

TABLE 3-3: ST. CLAIR TOWNSHIP

| Facility | Acreage | Amenities |
|----------------------|---------|--|
| Fred Meiselbach Park | 5 | Playground, ballfields, basketball courts, river access, fishing access, picnic areas, pavilion, restrooms |

TABLE 3-4: EAST CHINA TOWNSHIP

| Facility | Acreage | Amenities |
|--------------------|---------|---|
| East China Park | 81 | Playground, ballfields, soccer fields, basketball courts, river access, fishing access, ice skating/inline skating, trails, tennis courts, pickle ball courts, picnic areas, dog park, restrooms, pavilions, freighter watching |
| River Park | 0.2 | Playground, river access, fishing access, picnic areas |
| Manor Park | 1.6 | Playgrounds |
| Springborn Park | 0.2 | River access, fishing access, picnic tables, ADA accessible, kayak launch |
| Township Hall Site | 13 | |

OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

TABLE 3-5: SCHOOL FACILITIES

| School | Acreage | Amenities |
|---|---------|---|
| Gearing Elementary (Scheduled to be Closed) | 12 | Playfields and gymnasium |
| St. Clair High School | 40 | 2 ball fields, 1 softball field, 7 tennis courts, outdoor track and field, indoor pool, and 2 gyms |
| Solis Field | | 1 football/soccer field |
| St. Clair Middle School | 54.8 | 2 ball fields, 1 football/soccer field, 1 football practice field, 400 meter track, basketball hoops, seating, and 2 gymnasiums |





RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING IN THE CITY OF ST. CLAIR

The City is one of the largest providers of recreation programs in St. Clair County. The Recreation Department offers outstanding youth and adult team and individual sports opportunities, as well as special events to City residents and non-residents. The following programs are offered by the St. Clair Recreation Department:

Recreation Programs

- Adult Tennis
- Adult Dance
- After School Rallyball (Indoor Tennis)
- Casino Trips
- Co-Ed Volleyball
- Creative Tots
- Fitness Classes
- Golf Instruction
- Indoor Soccer
- Lacrosse
- Learn to Play/Drop-in Bridge
- Men's Basketball
- Pickleball
- Pi-Yoga
- Safety Town
- Senior Social Card Play
- Summer Dance
- Tae Kwon Do



- Travel-Bus Trips
- YAPS (Youth Activities for Summer)
- Youth Dance-Jazz/Ballet/Tap
- Youth Tennis

Special Events/Services

- Summer Outdoor Concert Series
- Family Outdoor Movies
- Kids Bike Parade
- Classic Car Show
- All-American Kids Fishing Derby
- Daddy-Daughter Valentine Dance
- Kids Garage Sale
- Mother-Son Bowling
- Skate-Bike Summer Jam & Fall Grind

Aquatic Programs

- Lessons
- Competitive Swim Team
- Open Swim
- Adult Swim
- Lap Swim
- Swimmercise

Other community events are sponsored by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the Chamber of Commerce, Riverview Mall Association, and service groups. They include craft shows, 5K running races, the St. Clair Art Fair, farmers' market, fireworks, concerts at Riverview Plaza, and the offshore boat races.

City walking routes have been mapped out. They include the Pine River Trail, the Riverview Run, Joellyn's Stroll Around Town, the St. Clair Loop, and the Historical Home Walk.

ST. CLAIR COUNTY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

St. Clair County currently owns nine properties devoted to parks and recreation activities that total 1,060.5 acres. These are:

- Goodells County Park 405 acres
- Columbus County Park 411 acres
- Fort Gratiot County Park 30 acres
- Woodsong County Park 33 acres
- Fort Gratiot Light Station 5 acres
- Blue Water River Walk County Park 6.5 acres
- North Channel County Park 10 acres
- Marine City Dredge Cut Access 34 acres
- Wadhams to Avoca Trail 160 acres (12 miles long)





For the purposes of comparing the County's parks and recreation property inventory with the recommended standards, it is also valuable to mention the St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency's 111-acre Pine River Nature Center, which is adjacent to Goodells County Park. By adding that acreage to the parks and trails inventory above, PARC property totals 1,171.5 acres.

GOODELLS COUNTY PARK

Facilities at the park include the Visitors Center, two playgrounds, river and fishing access, a seasonal ice skating rink, trails, four picnic shelters, a community center, historic buildings, a BMX track, a radio-controlled model airplane airfield and truck track, a butterfly garden, five special events buildings, the "Splashpad," equestrian facilities, and areas for outdoor events.

The "Splashpad" has 11 spray features that include two water cannons, five dumping buckets, ground geysers, and a rainbow water tunnel. The "Splashpad" is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and admission is free.

The Historic Village at Goodells County Park contains the Lynn Township Schoolhouse (1885), and the C.C Peck and Company bank (1908). Visitors will also see the Columbus Bible Church (1860), the Murphy/Ryan farmhouse (1872) and the Mudge Log Cabin (1863). The latest addition to the Historic Village is the Columbus Bible Church. The Church was moved to the park and restored, complete with its twelve-foot tall windows and spectacular bell tower.

COLUMBUS COUNTY PARK

Facilities at the park include mountain biking trails, walking trails, horse trails, fishing access, and permit-only hunting. The Belle River runs through the park, totaling 1.6 miles of frontage. A historic gambrel roof barn is located at Columbus County Park near Bauman Road and is used for maintenance and storage. The barn was restored by Columbus Township. In the winter, visitors can enjoy winter sports such as sledding and cross country skiing. In September 2021, the Will Bendik Memorial Disc Golf Course opened at the park.

Construction of an energy efficient park Lodge with modern restroom facilities, a picnic pavilion, offices and storage rooms was completed in 2012.

Activities at the park include picnics, weddings, educational programs, and meetings.

MAP 3-2: ST. CLAIR COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES



FORT GRATIOT COUNTY PARK

Fort Gratiot County Park is located in the northeast part of St. Clair County, just off M-25 on Metcalf Road. This 30-acre park offers breathtaking views of Lake Huron and 852 feet of shoreline and beach. It also includes picnic areas, restrooms, a children's playground, and paved walking trails.

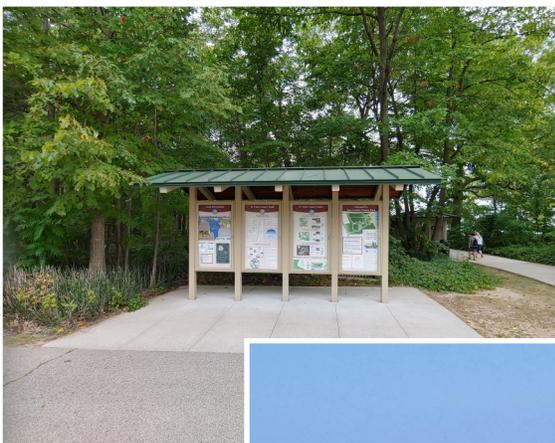
Fort Gratiot County Park is also home to the 1971 Tunnel Explosion Memorial which commemorates the construction accident that took the lives of 22 men working on the water intake tunnel located beneath the park. The 1971 Water Tunnel Explosion committee raised funds for the memorial which was erected in 2007. The Michigan Historic Commission dedicated a State Historical Marker at the site to mark the 40th anniversary of the tragedy.

Other improvements at the park include ADA-accessible restrooms and a playscape in 2007, as well as an overflow parking area in 2008. In early 2009, two picnic pavilions were completed and additional sections of boardwalk were installed on the beach.

WOODSONG COUNTY PARK

In 2008, St. Clair County purchased the 33-acre Camp Woodsong site from the Michigan Waterways Council of the Girl Scouts of America. The property is located off of Abbotsford Road, at the east end of Rynn Road, in Clyde Township.

Woodsong is a passive park with rustic trails that traverse along scenic, steep slopes that travel down to 2,800 ft of Black River shoreline. The park is the ideal place to nature watch. The rustic trails follow the natural terrain. Additionally, The Clinton River Area Mountain Bike Association (CRAMBA) continues to rapidly develop mountain bike trails at Woodsong County Park. These trails are a combination of two track and single track that follow the steep ridges next to the Black River. At present, about three miles of designated mountain bike trails are completed, with a goal of completing an additional mile when fully built out.





In 2017 a canoe and kayak launch was added, using a \$50,000 grant from EGLE. While the launch itself is fully accessible, it is important to note that steep trail leading from the parking lot to the launch is not ADA accessible. Future plans include trail improvements to make the trail easier to use.

Woodsong County Park provides opportunities for nature study, hiking, biking, and water activities, such as canoeing, kayaking, and fishing on the Black River.

FORT GRATIOT LIGHT STATION

The Fort Gratiot Light Station is the oldest lighthouse in Michigan. As the shipping needs on the Great Lakes increased in the 1820's, so did the need for a navigational aid at the mouth of the St. Clair River. In August of 1825 the first lighthouse in Michigan was built at Port Huron. The original tower was located near the base of the present day second span of the Blue Water Bridge. It was 32 feet high above ground level, 18 feet in diameter at the base, and tapered to nine feet across at the top.

The Coast Guard maintained the Fort Gratiot Light Station from the 1930's until they moved next door into the new station that was built in 2004. The property was officially transferred to St. Clair County in 2010. Restoration of the lighthouse was completed in 2013, and other property repairs and additions have been made using Michigan Coastal Zone Management Grant funding. The restoration of the tower was made possible by the "Save America's Treasures" grant program and a match from the City of Port Huron. The tower reopened for tours in the summer of 2012. The Port Huron Museum serves as a partner in leading tours of the site, programming, and private reservations. Friends of the Fort Gratiot Light Station raise funds for building restoration projects and provides volunteers.

BLUE WATER RIVER WALK COUNTY PARK

Blue Water River Walk County Park is a former railroad switch yard that has been partially restored to a coastal wetland. The wetlands feature three ponds, marshland and native plants. The habitat is home to amphibians, such as frogs and toads, and is a popular nesting and feeding spot for migratory birds. A boardwalk allows park visitors to get close to the wetland habitat without

disturbing the natural features and interpretive signs help explain how the wetlands work. Just north of the wetlands is a picnic pavilion, a shade trellis, walkways, landscaping, an artificial lawn activity area, picnic tables, grills and benches. Future developments will include a children's playground, restrooms and a second pavilion.

Traveling through the park is the Blue Water River Walk. The River Walk is a paved pathway that begins at Desmond Landing to the north and travels southwest to 10th Street. The Blue Water River Walk is part of the Bridge to Bay Trail System. The Blue Water River Walk is owned by the Community Foundation of St. Clair County. St. Clair County Parks leases and maintains the grounds.

NORTH CHANNEL COUNTY PARK

In December 2020, St. Clair County was awarded funding from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for an acquisition grant to purchase four parcels of land on the North Channel of the St. Clair River in Clay Township. The four parcels, totaling approximately 10 acres, are located between the Algonac Harbour Club and the MDNR Boat Launch on M-29. The project was a partnership with Six Rivers Land Conservancy, Clay Township and the City of Algonac. The new County Park will be developed in phases and will include a swimming beach, a kayak launch, shoreline fishing, walking trails, pavilions, a children's playground and a paved parking lot. It will also be one of the designated locations along the new St. Clair-Macomb Birding Trail, created in 2021.

PINE RIVER NATURE CENTER

The St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency's Pine River Nature Center is an educational facility whose mission is to promote the awareness, understanding and stewardship of the Blue Water Area's natural and cultural heritage. The center provides programs for local schools to enhance their science and mathematics curricula with outdoor-based field studies correlated with the Michigan Curriculum Framework and offers outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities for area residents.

The Pine River Nature Center opened to the public in the May of 2003. The Nature Center sits on 111 acres of property, with over 4,800 feet of the Pine River meandering through it. Since opening, over 21,900 students from around St. Clair County have visited the center for programs. Activities and events at the center include the following:

- Opportunities to hike over two miles of trails (open daily from dawn to dark).
- Browse the indoor displays and live animals.
- Read about nature or do research in the library.
- Attend public programs, including star gazing parties and nature walks.
- Volunteer to help with special events and school programs.
- Adopt-a-Trail.
- Visit the universally-accessible (ADA) tree house.

MAP 3-3: REGIONAL RECREATION

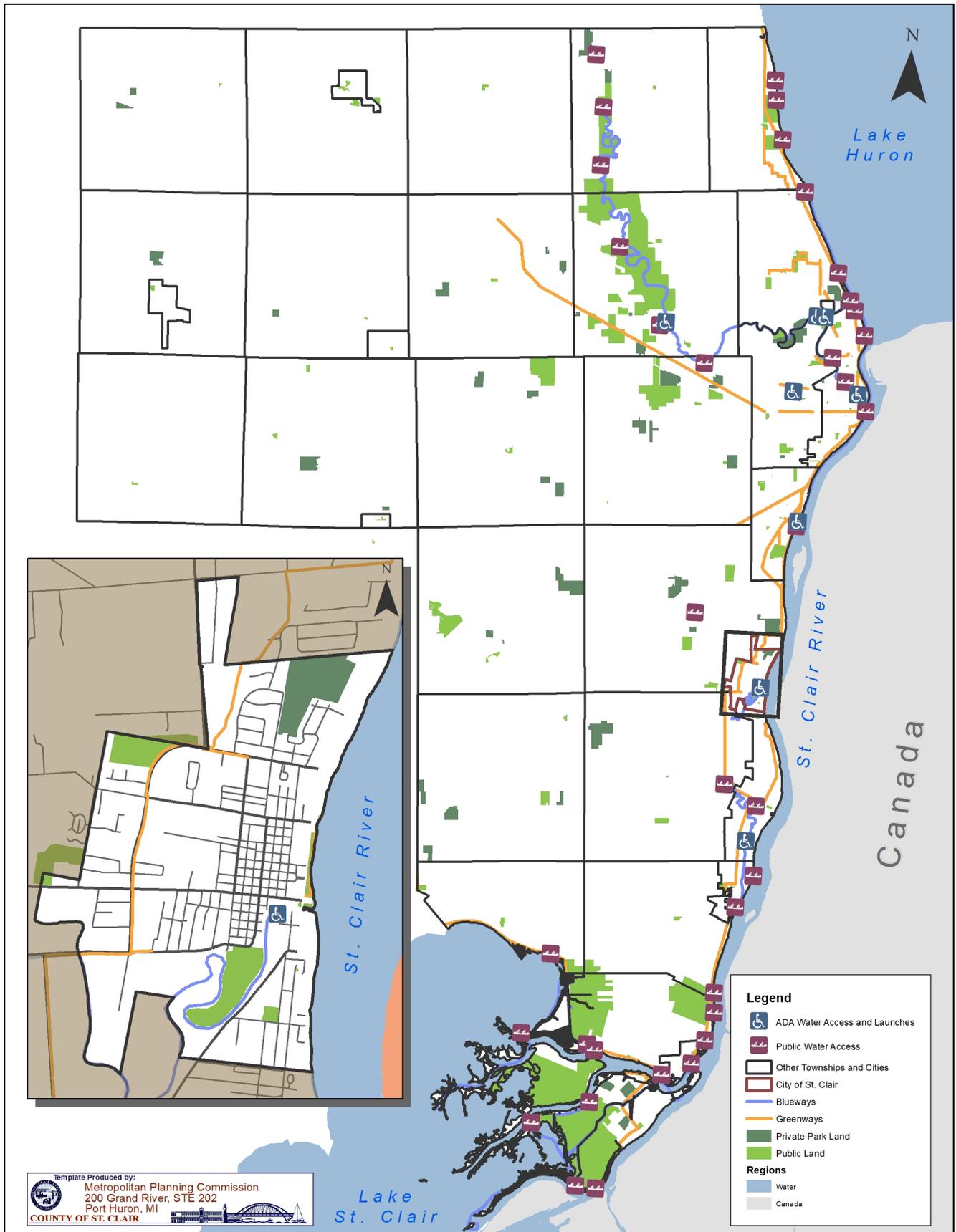


TABLE 3-6: STATE OF MICHIGAN RECREATION FACILITIES

| Facility | Acreage | Amenities |
|-------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Algonac State Park | 1,450 | Cottrellville & Clay Townships |
| Lakeport State Park | 1,215 | Burtchville Township |
| Port Huron State Game Area | 6,627 | Grant, Clyde, & Kimball Townships |
| St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Area | 10,300 | Clay Township |
| St. Johns Marsh Recreation Area | 2,477 | Clay & Ira Townships |
| Mini Game Area | 109 | St. Clair Township |

STATE OF MICHIGAN RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The State of Michigan owns and manages 22,178 acres of resource-based facilities in St. Clair County, including Algonac State Park, Lakeport State Park, the Port Huron State Game Area, the St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Refuge, the St. John’s Marsh Recreation Area, and a mini-game area in St. Clair Township. See Table 3-6.

GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

Greenways are corridors of land recognized for their ability to connect people and places together. According to the EPA, greenways promote outdoor recreation, catalyze economic development, increase adjacent property values, celebrate historical and cultural assets, promote conservation and environmental education and improve quality of life.

Greenways have multiple purposes, but from a recreation perspective they have two major functions:

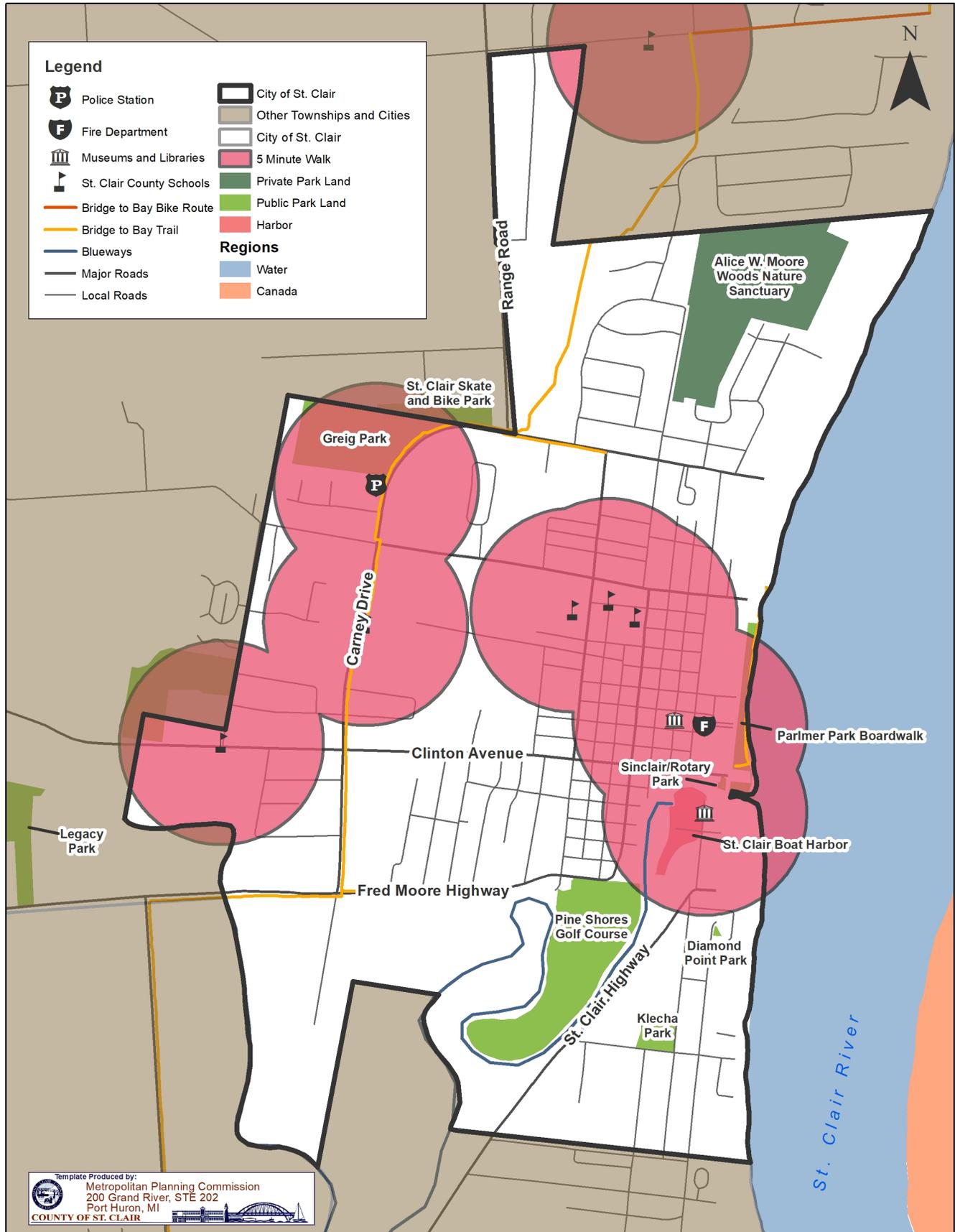
1. To link and facilitate hiking and biking access between residential areas and parks.
2. To provide opportunities for the linear forms of outdoor recreation (i.e. hiking, jogging, bicycling, equestrian riding, and walking) in which many St. Clair County residents engage today. These recreation activities require the development of trails along the greenways.

There are two primary trail systems within St. Clair County: the Wadhams to Avoca Trail and the Bridge to Bay Trail.

WADHAMS TO AVOCA TRAIL

In 1999, St. Clair County PARC purchased the surface rights to 9.82 miles (100 acres) of right-of-way from CSX Railroad and began developing it as the Wadhams to Avoca Trail. In 2001 and 2004, PARC purchased two additional properties totaling 17.65 acres adjacent to the trail north of Imlay City Road for a trailhead and parking. In 2003, PARC purchased the surface rights to an additional two and a half miles of CSX Railroad right-of-way totaling 17.66 acres from Wadhams Road to Griswold Road. The trail is over 12.4 miles long and contains 160 acres.

MAP 3-4: WALKABLE ST. CLAIR - FIVE MINUTE WALKING MAP





To date, the 640-foot Mill Creek Trestle has been decked and railed for pedestrians and bike riders. Three acres of land southeast of the Trestle was purchased to create a horse crossing at Mill Creek.

At the south end of the trail in Kimball Township, over five miles of trail have been paved starting at McLain Road running southeast to Griswold Road. The paved section of the trail passes through a developing residential area and is heavily used by residents.

In a joint effort with the St. Clair County Road Commission, a hybrid pedestrian signal was installed in 2010 where the trail crosses Wadhams Road. It was the first time this type of signal has been used for a trail crossing in Michigan. The signal prompts flashing lights to stop traffic when a pedestrian wishes to cross the road.

Designated parking areas are located at the Wadhams Road, Imlay City Road, Lapeer Road and Avoca Road trailheads. The non-motorized trail is open to walkers, bicyclists and equestrians.

There are plans to extend this trail northwest to Yale, as well as to connect it to the Bridge to Bay Trail through Port Huron Township and heading east toward the St. Clair River.

BRIDGE TO BAY TRAIL

The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) is working in conjunction with 13 local units of government, Friends of the St. Clair River, the Metropolitan Planning Commission and the St. Clair County Community Foundation to develop a 54-mile paved trail from Lakeport State Park to New Baltimore. A regional trails governing board helps to plan and promote the trail, while each local unit of government is responsible for constructing their section of the trail. Even though PARC plays an instrumental coordinating role in the development of the Bridge to Bay Trail, the property that makes up that trail is owned by various municipalities and townships. Most trail

MAP 3-5: BRIDGE TO BAY TRAIL



The Bridge to Bay Trail is a diverse trail system of boardwalks, riverwalks, rail trails and bike paths that extends along 50 miles of shoreline across St. Clair County, Michigan. Experience picturesque views, charming towns, parks and beaches, freighter watching and the blue waters of Lake Huron, the St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair.

Learn More at www.bridgetobaytrail.org

Legend



Amenities



Amenities subject to seasonal availability and to change.



Michigan's Thumb Coast



BRIDGE TO BAY TRAIL



construction projects are funded by grants. PARC usually helps to fund the local match required for trail construction grants.

The Bridge to Bay Trail extends from St. Clair County's northern border, under the Blue Water Bridges; through Port Huron, Marysville, St. Clair, Marine City, and Algonac; and past state and municipal parks, museums, gazebos, and lighthouses. Sometimes the trail is within reach of the water's edge and sometimes a few miles inland. It connects communities together for walkers, joggers, strollers, and bicyclists of all ages. The trail varies from a ten-foot wide separated paved pathway in the right of way along a road, or a five-foot wide dedicated bike lane.

Community partners have a primary goal of connecting the Bridge to Bay Trail to the Wadhams to Avoca Trail within St. Clair County, the Macomb Orchard Trail in Richmond (Macomb County), and the St. Clair Parkway Trail in Lambton, Ontario, Canada via ferry. As of 2021, roughly 26 miles of the 54-mile Bridge to Bay Trail is complete.

Funding for the Bridge to Bay Trail comes from the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Millage, local government funds, and state and federal grants, and philanthropic grants. Grant money for the trail has been provided by the United States government through federal transportation grants, and by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF).

US BIKE ROUTE 20

US Bike Route 20 is an established bicycle route in Michigan from the Walpole Island/Algonac Ferry in Downtown Algonac, where it connects to local trails in Canada, to Ludington, Michigan, where the route continues across the car ferry S. S. Badger to Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The Michigan segment operates on bicycle paths, county roads and state roads, favoring paved roads that have either low to moderate traffic or paved shoulders. Bicyclists on the route will encounter historic small towns like Marine City and Vassar, the old-world Bavarian charm of Frankenmuth, and the Manistee National Forest.

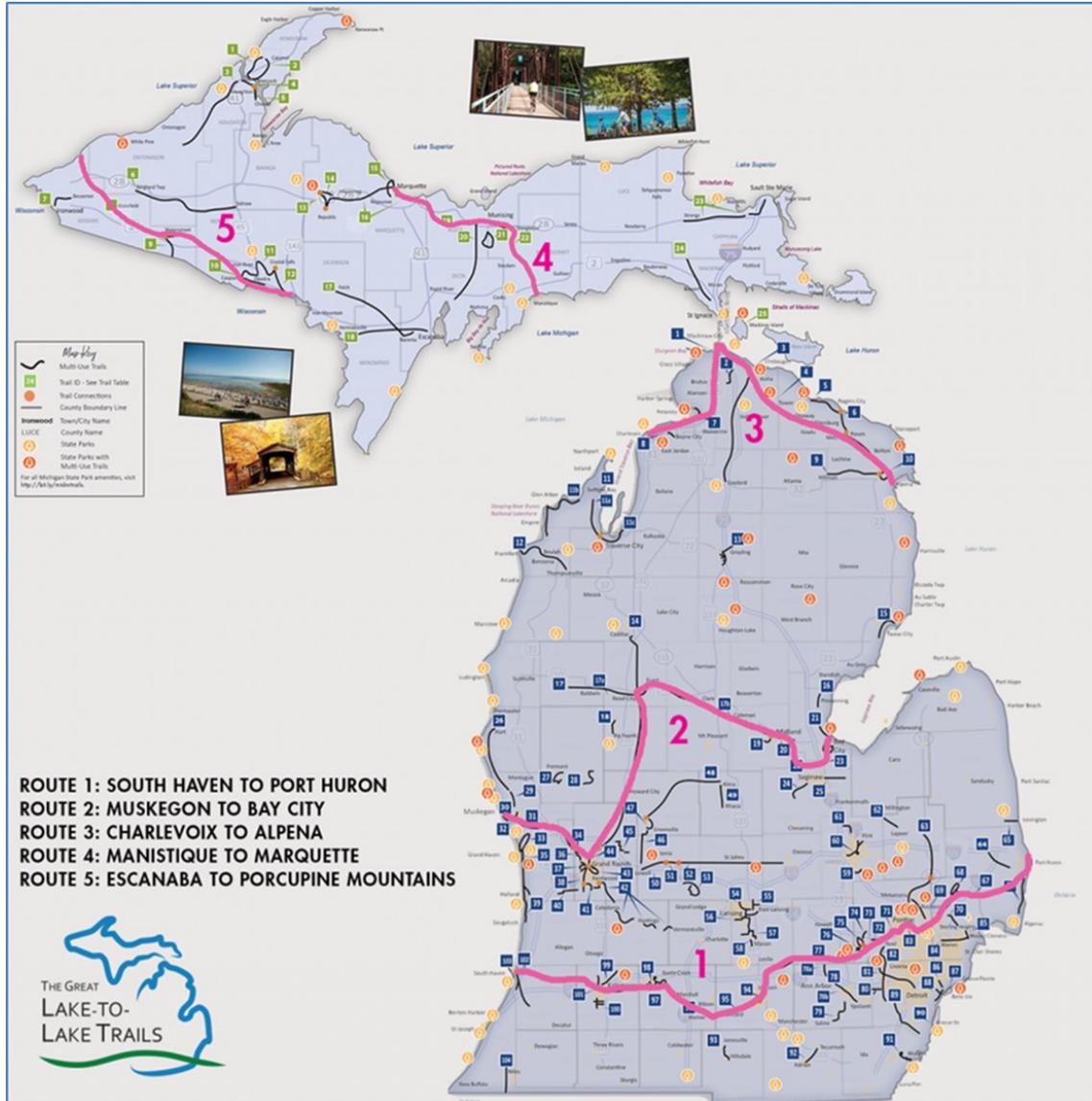
At present, US Bike Route 20 follows the Bridge to Bay Trail along Carney Drive in the City of St. Clair.

THE GREAT LAKE-TO-LAKE TRAIL, ROUTE #1

The Great Lake-to-Lake Trails Route #1 is a 275-mile shared use trail across Michigan's southern Lower Peninsula that links Lakes Michigan and Huron while featuring pastoral farms and woodlots mingled with small towns and major cities. The linear destination trail connects visitors to nature while fostering healthy, sustainable and prosperous communities from South Haven to Port Huron. Route #1 is one of five Great Lake-to-Lake Trails that the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance (MTGA) intends to develop.

The Great Lake-to-Lake Trail offers Michigan's trail users a unique opportunity to experience quiet rural pathways and urban excursions as it winds its way across the southern lower portion of Michigan from shore to shore. The MTGA began the Great Lake-to-Lake Trails Project in 2009 with a grant from the Kresge Foundation to accelerate the development of cross-state trails while enhancing tourism and economic development opportunities.

MAP 3-6: GREAT LAKE-TO-LAKE TRAILS





GREAT LAKES WAY

The purpose of the Great Lakes Way is to build upon the groundwork laid by so many others to strengthen and define the greenways and blueways of the Huron-Erie corridor and ensure that people of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicities and interests feel welcomed and share in its benefits. The Great Lakes Way is a regional trail that builds upon existing assets and mapping and ensuring broad equity.

Creation of the Great Lakes Way brings together the collective assets of Monroe, Wayne, Macomb, and St. Clair counties. By designating these greenways and blueways as the Great Lakes Way, the region can focus on the important linkages still to be developed, while delivering a clear brand and message that will be recognizable to its residents. The goal is to link residents and visitors to the impressive collective of natural, educational, and recreational assets throughout the region. More information about the Great Lakes Way can be found online at <https://cfsem.org/initiative/greatlakesway/>.

ST. CLAIR COUNTY TRAILS PLAN

St. Clair County, along with the Community Foundation of St. Clair County and numerous local and regional partners, developed an updated countywide trails plan in 2019 that identifies existing gaps in countywide non-motorized trail networks, identifies preferred alternatives to eliminate those gaps, and prioritizes the timing and sequencing for completing needed connections. The overarching goal is to complete the Bridge to Bay Trail and Wadhams to Avoca trail networks, which includes connecting to the Macomb Orchard Trail and the Great Lake-to-Lake Trail Route #1, which runs from South Haven in the western part of the state to Port Huron in the eastern part of the state.

The City should collaborate with partners, including St. Clair County, the Community Foundation of St. Clair County, and Friends of the St. Clair River, to implement the St. Clair County Trails Plan and assist in developing a fully-connected regional trail network. The County Trails Plan identifies four main trail gaps and recommended connections in the City of St. Clair:

CLINTON STREET BIKEWAY (GAP #10) - IDENTIFIED AS A CRITICAL CONNECTION

The Clinton Street Bikeway is critical for providing an east-west connection from the existing Fred Moore side path trail and connected trails/side paths through the center of town east into the downtown commercial area. Section 10A in the residential zone is relatively straightforward given the lack of on-street parking and overly wide travel lanes with unused pavement areas. Section 10B, going through a more commercial area, will be trickier to construct but provides a connection.

The City received a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant in the amount of \$437,115 through the Michigan Department of Transportation in 2020 to develop the Clinton Avenue Bikeway. The matching funds in the amount of \$291,410 includes funding assistance through the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation and the Community Foundation of St. Clair County. The trail will be constructed in 2023.

RIVER ROAD IMPROVEMENTS (GAP #9) - IDENTIFIED AS AN IMPORTANT CONNECTION

Planned improvements in St. Clair along portions of Riverside Drive and extending into River Road include a road diet and establishing bike lanes. Road diet plans indicate adequate width for creating buffered/protected bike lanes, and/or consolidating bike lanes into a protected two-way bikeway, especially in the commercial sections (9C). Section 9A is a priority for a side path continuation or buffered bikeway via shoulder widening.

The second gap proposes the following facilities:

- Off-street path that connects Griswold to Lapeer diagonally along a CN rail spur.
- Protected bike lanes from Lapeer to Water Street
- Protected bike lanes on Water Street
- A side path on 32nd Street
- Side path on the Lapeer Connector

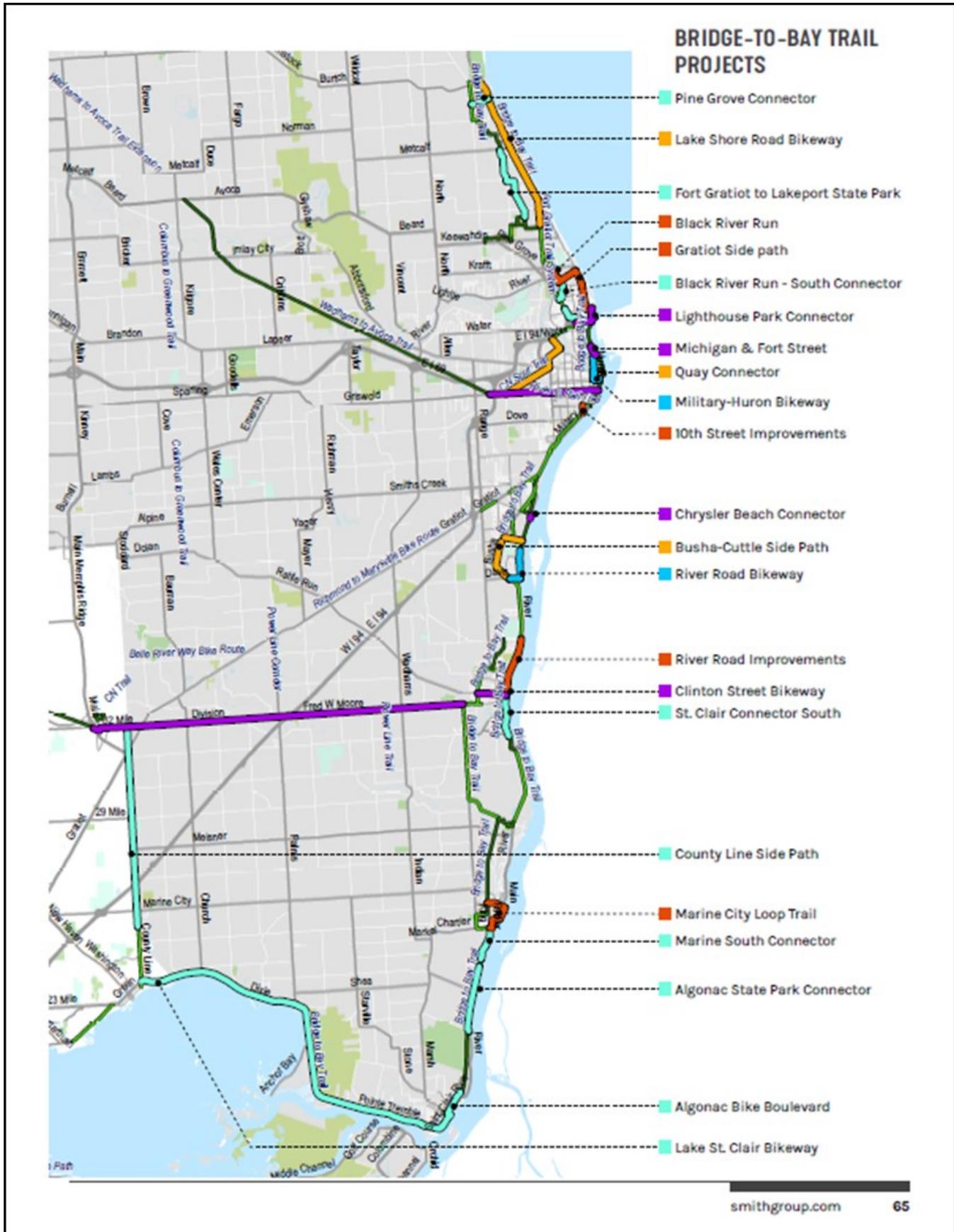
ST. CLAIR SOUTH CONNECTOR (GAP #9) - IDENTIFIED AS A SECONDARY CONNECTION

The St. Clair South Connector is an on-road route utilizing conventional bike lanes and short segments of buffered bike lanes where feasible. The right-of-way is narrow and of limited width for more extensive facilities. The side path on King Road provides a higher level facility (and is already built) and should be used as the main connection south from St. Clair.

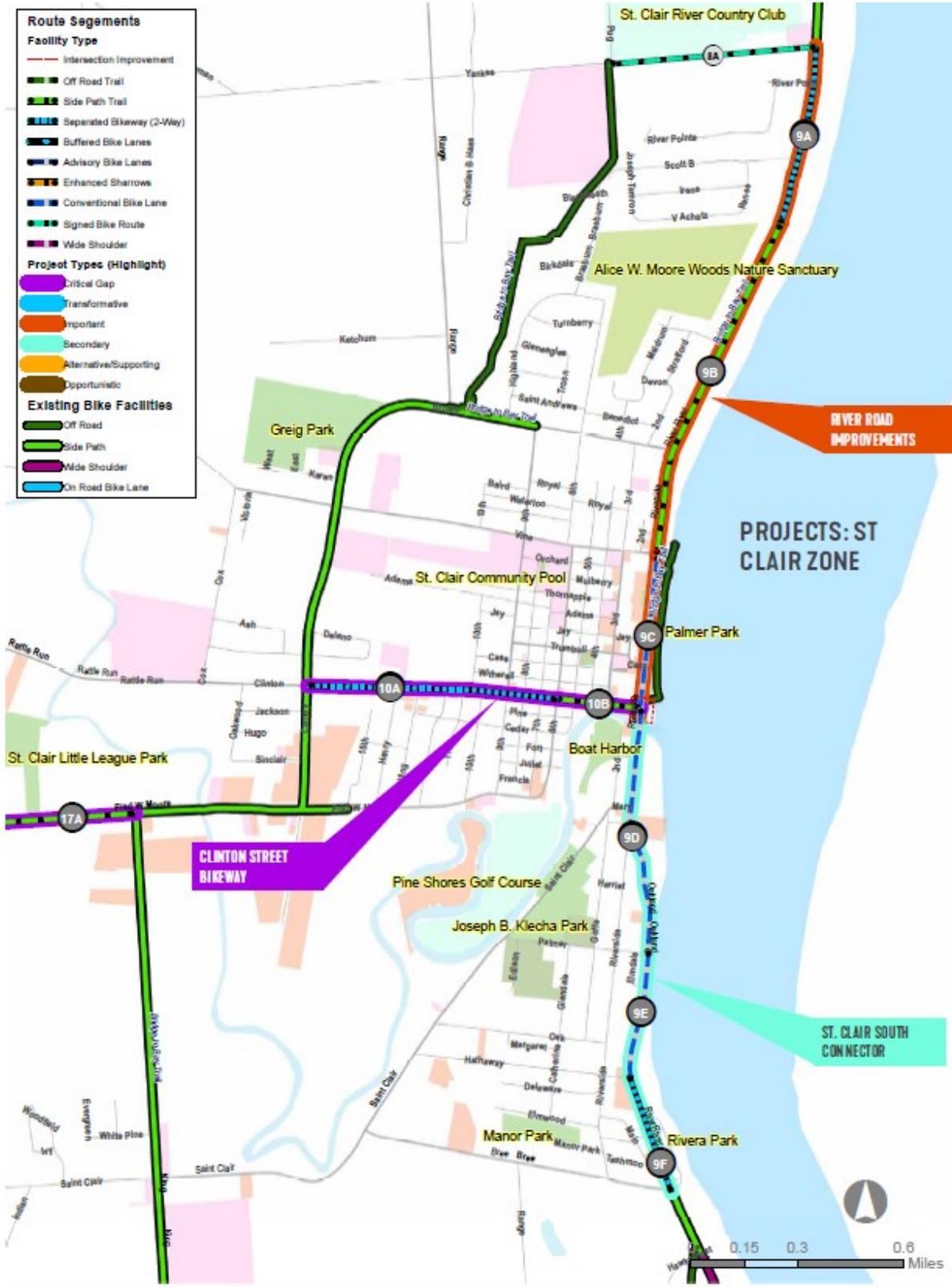
FRED MOORE HIGHWAY TRAIL (GAP #17) - IDENTIFIED AS A CRITICAL CONNECTION

Gap 17 reflects a preferred route for extending the Great Lake to Lake Trail Route #1 east from its current end point in the City of Richmond (as part of the Richmond Trail Extension described above). Segment 17A provides a side path connection on the south side of the Division Street and Fred Moore Highway from Richmond eastward to the existing side paths at King Road and Fred Moore Highway in St. Clair. Large portions of Fred Moore Highway have an additional 80 feet of right-of-way on the south side of the road, providing opportunities to establish a side path trail well removed from the road way. Road bridges over streams and/or I-94 are wide enough to

MAP 3-7: ST. CLAIR COUNTY TRAILS PLAN - BRIDGE TO BAY TRAIL



MAP 3-8: ST. CLAIR COUNTY TRAILS PLAN - CITY OF ST. CLAIR CONNECTIONS



accommodate transitioning to a buffered bikeway in some locations, but in others may require a separate boardwalk or non-motorized bridge. Fred Moore Highway was selected, in working closely with the Steering Committee, as the preferred route given its relatively lower cost of construction and, more importantly, that it provides a direct connection to the City of St. Clair and other shoreline communities. See Map 3-7.

THE BLUEWAYS OF ST. CLAIR

The Blueways of St. Clair is a system of 17 water trails, totaling 151 miles, in nine unique bodies of water. The Island Loop National Water Trail, the Fort Gratiot Sojourn, and the Lake Huron Paddle run within the township or along its border. More information can be found at www.BluewaysOfStClair.org.

Pine River Paddle

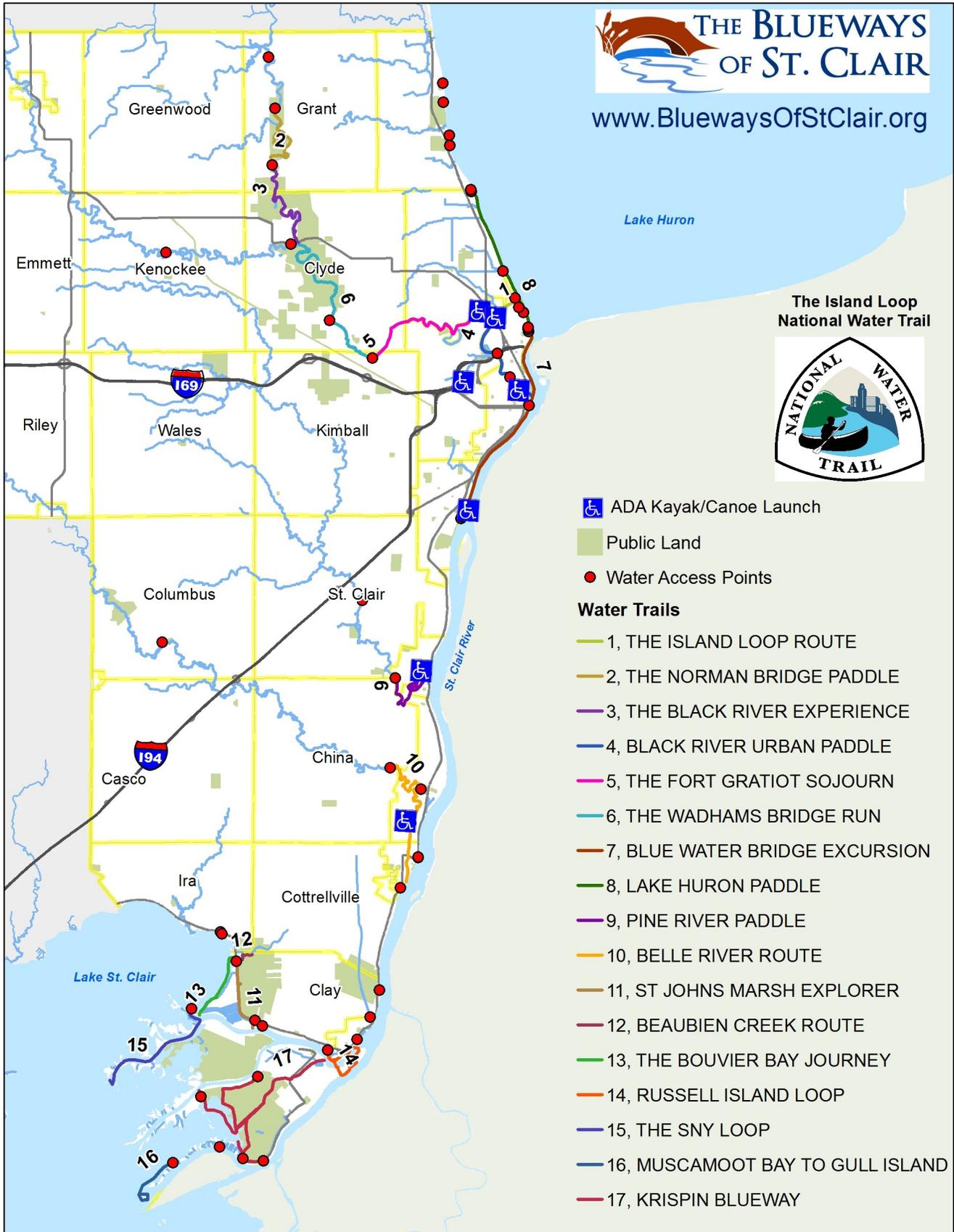
The Pine River Paddle is the one water trail that is part of the Blueways of St. Clair within the city. This is a beautiful paddle along the Pine River that begins at the St. Clair Boat Harbor, where paddlers can rent kayaks by the hour. The Pine River Paddle is identified as route #9 on the Blueways map (Map 3-9).

Island Loop National Water Trail

The 10.2-mile Island Loop National Water Trail was the first national water trail to be designated in Michigan and the 14th in the United States. It navigates between the United States and Canada for 2.5 miles and meanders through Fort Gratiot Township, Port Huron Township, and the City of Port Huron. The trail makes a loop from the Black River to the Black River Canal to Lake Huron into the St. Clair River and back to the Black River. It also passes the oldest lighthouse in Michigan, the Thomas Edison Museum, the Huron Lightship Museum, and the Acheson Maritime Center.



MAP 3-9: BLUEWAYS OF ST. CLAIR





DRAFT

CHAPTER 4 PLANNING PROCESS & PUBLIC INPUT



THE PLANNING PROCESS

The success of any planning process is reliant upon stakeholder involvement. The City of St Clair has committed itself to pursue a proactive public outreach effort throughout the development of this plan. Efforts focused on soliciting community involvement to maximize awareness of the recreation planning process.

2023-2027 PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The process that led to the development of this five-year Parks and Recreation Plan included:

- A decision by the St. Clair Recreation Commission to update the City's five-year recreation plan.
- Contracting the services of the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission to manage the project and complete the update.
- A review of existing City planning documents by the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission.
- A survey of 5th through 8th graders at St. Clair Middle School in March 2022.
- An online leadership survey distributed to members of the St. Clair City Council, Recreation Commission, Planning Commission, and other key stakeholders in City administration.
- An online communitywide survey that was available the entire month of October 2022.
- Drafting of the Parks and Recreation Plan.
- A presentation of the Parks and Recreation Plan to the City Council on December 19, 2022.
- Review of the Parks and Recreation Plan document by the Recreation Commission and the City Council.
- A 30-day public review and comment period that began on **December 7, 2022** and ended on **January 7, 2023**. The 30-day public review and comment period is required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in order for a community to be in compliance for grant applications.
- A public hearing held on January 16, 2023 to receive additional citizen comments.
- Adoption of the Parks and Recreation Plan by the St. Clair City Council at its January 16, 2023 meeting.
- Transmission of the adopted 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Plan to St. Clair County.
- Transmission of the adopted 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Plan to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).
- Submittal of the adopted 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Plan to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).

OVERVIEW OF STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Input from citizens and local leaders was essential for the development of the Parks and Recreation Plan for St. Clair.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP SURVEY

At the start of this planning process in July 2022, members of the City Council, Recreation Commission, Planning Commission, City Administration, and other members of City boards and commissions were given an online survey to establish a framework on the key planning issues related to the update of the City's Parks and Recreation Plan. A summary of input from the leadership survey can be found below.

Summary of input on parks and recreation issues from July 2022 Leadership Survey

- More programs for the growing elderly population, including outdoor programs.
- Continue to maintain, improve, and invest in non-motorized transportation options.
- Would like to see more outdoor pickleball courts.
- Klecha Park desperately needs some attention. New playground and skating rink?
- The City needs a new aquatic center.
- The swimming pool needs to be rebuilt.
- Actual bathrooms, not portable toilets.
- Improvements to Klecha Park and Diamond Point Park.
- Better maintenance of the kayaks at the boat harbor.
- The harbor needs sea wall replacement.
- More outreach, inclusion of local people that use facilities.
- Replace deck boards on docks and relocate the kayak launch.
- Repair drainage issues at the golf course.
- The City needs to have programs/leagues at the golf course, including lessons for kids.
- Develop a splash pad at Klecha or Greig Park.
- The City should continue to operate a community pool and should identify a location for a new pool.
- The south end is lacking proper playground equipment. Families load up their kids to take them to Greig Park because there is little for children to do at Klecha Park.
- Would like to see a bike trail to the St. Clair Little League (Legacy Park).

Summary of what Local Leaders like best about parks and recreation in St. Clair

- Access to the St. Clair River and Pine River.
- The City's parks and recreation offerings are good for all age groups.
- Having a community pool.
- The parks are in good locations.
- The Boat Harbor.
- Palmer Park and the boardwalk downtown.
- The variety of parks - some are active and others are not.
- The City offers a diverse array of quality recreation programs.
- Biking/walking paths.
- Greig Park nature trails.
- Accessible pathways and trails.
- Proximity to residential areas.
- The parks are clean and well-maintained.
- A source of pride for the City of St. Clair.
- Children have a place to play.
- Beautiful views at Palmer and Rotary parks.

Summary of what Local Leaders like least about parks and recreation in St. Clair

- Bike paths aren't connected to each other.
- Limited activity south of the Pine River.

City of St. Clair Recreation
Community Resources

Page · Park

547 N Carney Drive, St. Clair, MI, United States, Michigan

(810) 329-7121

info@stclairrec.com

stclairrec.com

Open now

Not yet rated (0 Reviews)

4 likes

Like Comment

City of St. Clair Recreation
October 4 · 🌐

Survey deadline: Sunday, October 23, 2022!!!!
Please take the time to respond!!
Here is the link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/stclairparks2022>

Don't want to take the survey? We welcome your input on park improvements, maintenance, recreation programming, city pool or any comments or suggestions. Post on this Facebook page or contact 810-329-7121 x3. ... See more

We want to know what you think!

COMMUNITY SURVEY

1 like 1 Share

Like Comment

Photos See all photos

City of St. Clair 222 Downtown Christmas Dec Special Thanks: St. Clair Endowment Fund

Our Annual Lighted Santa Parade and Tree Lighting Friday, November 18 Downtown - 6:00pm

FALL 2022 Tai Chi

- Most of the kids' park area is in the northern part of town.
- Not enough parking.
- There is no recreation center for kids.
- Need more activities for teens.
- There are still some dead trees in some of the parks.
- Lack of year round restroom facilities.
- Need a dog park to run dogs in town.
- Present condition of the City pool.
- No online payment option for programs.
- It is time for a new pool.

ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY

During the month of October 2022, a community input survey was available online for residents and other stakeholders to provide input on specific questions, as well as ideas and suggestions on open-ended questions. The community survey provided the planning team with valuable feedback on parks and recreation issues in the City of St. Clair. In total, 68.75% of the respondents were St. Clair residents and the other 31.25% lived outside of the City - predominantly in St. Clair Township.

Roughly 56% of respondents indicated they visited a City park at least once a month and another 12.5% said they visit once a week. Over 56% said they were satisfied with the recreational programming offered by the City, while about 32% were unsure about the programs offered by the City, suggesting more marketing and promotion of recreational programs is necessary.

Community Survey: Summary of input regarding Greig Park

- Walking path needs updated.
- Splash pad like Goodells Park.
- Lower basketball nets for younger kids.
- Better restroom facilities.
- Security cameras.
- Additional nature/science activities for young children/toddlers. Could be guided walks or scavenger huts in the nature area.
- A new pool either at the existing site or at Greig Park if there is room.

Community Survey: Summary of input regarding Palmer Park

- Fix the depressions in the ground.
- Love the river access near the St. Clair Inn, can we add one to the area near the Voyageur?
- Restrooms and drinking fountains.
- Sometimes music through speakers is too loud.

Community Survey: Summary of input regarding Klecha Park

- Add a splash pad.
- The park needs an overall update.
- Updates to play structures.

Community Survey: Summary of input regarding Community Pool

- Year-round aquatics center.
- Larger pool area with grass/trees and better amenities.
- Pool is not family friendly.
- Community recreation center like Macomb Township - courts, gym, pool, etc.
- Pool and splash pad in same location.
- "I had no idea we have a community pool."
- Relocate pool to Klecha Park and include a splash pad.
- Lack of shade in current location.
- Splash pad would be better fit at Greig Park or Palmer Park than at current location.
- Whether existing pool is upgraded or a new pool is built elsewhere - the City needs to have a community pool.

Community Survey: What people like best about parks and recreation in St. Clair

- Palmer Park.
- Greig Park.
- Open spaces to sit.
- Friendly parks and recreation staff.

- Parks are well-maintained.
- Cleanliness.
- Imagination Station playground.
- Walkability.
- Age appropriate facilities.
- A lot of play structures for kids.
- Wide range of activities for different seasons.
- Skate park.
- Bike paths - but they need repairs.
- Walking paths.
- Sitting by the water at Palmer Park.
- Landscaping/gardens.
- Affordability.

Community Survey: What people like least about parks and recreation in St. Clair

- The condition of the golf course.
- Lack of community drinking fountains.
- Nothing geared toward young professionals.
- Walking path needs to be updated.
- Pool hours are too short.
- Old playground equipment at Klecha Park.
- The pool is pretty rough.
- No community restrooms.
- No basketball at Klecha Park.
- No ongoing tourist activities like frog ponds/rose gardens.
- No activities that make it easy to meet new parents.
- Trees sometimes need to be trimmed.
- The pool should be better advertised. People who live in town do not realize there is a community pool.

Community Survey: Summary of other comments and suggestions

- Importance of pool and strong desire for a splash pad at either Greig or Klecha Park.
- The boardwalk at Rotary Park needs improvements.
- Freshen up existing parks, they look tired and worn.
- Expand the pool season and expand programming hours.
- The golf course needs drainage improvements.
- Better care of fairways and greens at the golf course.
- Look into creating a frog and turtle habitat for the public to enjoy.
- Would love a pool with a splash pad, slides, and other kid-related amenities.
- The pool should be in a central location in the city to allow children to ride bikes or walk to the pool.
- We really need a new pool. Swimming has been an integral part of our kids' success at swimming and navigating the St. Clair River as swimmers.

SUMMARY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS SURVEY

A survey of middle school students at St. Clair Middle School was conducted by a teacher in March 2022. The student council - 5th grade through 8th grade - were represented through an online survey. Additionally, 6th through 8th graders in a Positivity class were able to provide a list of pros and cons about the City. Below is a summary of their input.

Summary of activities kids would use if the parks had them (38 responses):

- Rock climbing: 71.1%
- Obstacle course: 68.4%
- Music in the park (student musicians): 52.6%
- Photography class: 50%
- RC car racing: 31.6%
- Nature classes: 31.6%
- Gardening: 28.9%
- Organized flag football: 23.7%
- Workout path: 18.4%

Summary of activities they currently do at the parks:

- Zip lines.
- Swings and monkey bars.
- Play/hang out with friends.
- Play baseball.
- Play basketball.
- Walk on the trails/paths.
- Run at the park.
- Play tag.
- Walk along the boardwalk.
- Play on the playground equipment.

Summary of activities they wish they could do at the parks:

- Tire swing.
- Dodge ball.
- Swimming pool.
- Play volleyball.
- Play spike ball.
- Some kind of water activity in the summer, like a splash pad.
- Biking hills.
- More playground equipment.
- More climbing stuff.
- Trampoline.
- Monkey bars where “my feet don’t touch the ground.”
- Wish there was a water park.
- Not always enough swings.
- More basketball courts.

- More trails.
- Vending machines.
- RC car rink.
- Clean bathrooms at Greig Park.
- More zip lines.

Summary of activities or programs they would join if offered by the City:

- Rollerblading.
- Dog walking.
- Painting class at some of the parks.
- Clean up the parks.
- Arts and crafts.
- Photography.
- Something athletic or drawing classes.
- Nature class.
- RC car racing.
- Graphic art classes
- Summer swimming school.
- Any sports like basketball, volleyball, softball, etc.
- Nature trails,
- Bird watching.
- A race.

SUMMARY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' LIST OF PROS ABOUT PARKS AND RECREATION:

- Greig Park is great.
- Palmer Park is nice to go on walks.
- River is nice.
- Parks are clean.
- A lot of things downtown for fun.
- Palmer Park.
- There are a lot of trees.
- Entertainment for kids.
- Space to hang out.
- The fountain.
- Beautiful library.
- The plaza.
- The parks.

SUMMARY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' LIST OF CONS ABOUT PARKS AND RECREATION:

- No place to recycle.
- Not many things for kids/teens.
- Parking lots are horrible.
- Not enough basketball courts.
- Not enough swings.
- You can get bored at the plaza.
- Mats are beat up in Greig Park.
- Graffiti/vandalism on equipment.
- Portable toilets.
- Not enough bike park things to do.
- No security cameras.
- Dirty bathrooms.
- Not enough decorations.
- Ticks in the weeds at Greig Park.
- Trash in the parking lot.
- Bigger City pool.

TABLE 4-1: COMPARISON TO SUGGESTED PARKLAND ACREAGE STANDARDS

| Type of Park | NRPA Standard Acres/1,000 Population | Acreage per NRPA Standard Based on 20,000 Population | Existing |
|---|--|---|--|
| Close to Home City Townships Total | 6.25 to 10.5 acres | 130 to 218 acres | 159 acres 186 acres 352 acres |
| Regional Parks | 15 to 20 acres | 312 to 415 acres | 35,208 acres |
| Public Schools | - | - | 122 acres |
| Linear Parks | - | - | 1.8 miles |
| Special Use Facilities: Boat Harbor & Golf Course | - | - | 58 acres |
| Conservancy Sites: Alice Woods | - | - | 66 acres |

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND FACILITY COMPARISON

An essential task in the recreation planning process is to determine the needs of the community as a basis for an action plan. This task can be accomplished not only by asking people what they desire, but also by comparing the City to established recreation standards based on the size of the community and its service area. In addition, the Recreation Commission can simply make observations of what is needed to improve the community’s park system.

PARK ACREAGE AND FACILITY COMPARISON

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends a minimum amount of park land and park facilities to adequately serve a given population size. The purpose of the NRPA guidelines is to provide minimum park land and facility development standards that are applicable nationwide for recreation planning purposes. While the NRPA standards are a helpful guide in determining minimum needed park acreage and facility, it should not be interpreted to be the only measure of whether the City’s needs are being met. A parks and recreation system should be tailored to meet the needs of the community.

According to the NRPA, parks are categorized as mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, and regional parks. The mini, neighborhood, and community parks are the close-to-home parks, designed to satisfy the recreational needs of local communities. All the City parks are considered close-to-home parks. According to NRPA standards, the suggested amount of close-to-home parkland is 6.25 to 10.5 acres for every 1,000 residents.

Regional parks serve a broader area (about one hour drive or 40-mile radius) and focus on meeting the recreation needs of the region as well as preserving unique areas. For the City of St. Clair, regional parks include the state and county-owned parks and recreation areas described in the Recreation Inventory (Chapter 3). The NRPA also recognizes other types of parks such as special use facilities, schoolyards, and private recreation facilities, which can contribute to the local parks and recreation system. This would include the municipal harbor and golf course as well as the public school and private recreation facilities in St. Clair.

TABLE 4-2: COMPARISON TO SUGGESTED FACILITY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

| Activity/Facility | NRPA Standard Unit/Population | # per NRPA Standard | City | School | Townships | Total |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|------|--------|-----------|-------|
| Swimming Pool (Outdoor) | 1/20,000 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Swimming Pool (Indoor) | None | N/A | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Baseball Fields | 1/5,000 | 4 | 11 | 4 | 7 | 22 |
| Softball Fields | 1/5,000 | 4 | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Soccer Fields | 1/10,000 | 2 | - | 2 | 12 | 14 |
| Football Fields | 1/20,000 | 1 | - | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Roller Hockey Rink | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Tennis Courts | 1/2,000 | 10 | - | 7 | - | 7 |
| Basketball Courts | 1/5,000 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Volleyball Courts | 1/5,000 | 4 | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| 1/4 Mile Track | 1/20,000 | 4 | - | 2 | - | 2 |
| Golf Course | 1/50,000 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 |

Source: Lancaster, R.A., Ed. *Recreation Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*. Alexandria, VA: NRPA, 1983; Mertes, J.D. and J.R. Hall. *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*. Alexandria, VA: NRPA, 1995.

Table 4-1 presents a comparison of the NRPA suggested park land standards with existing area parks based on a combined population of about 20,000 which includes the City of St. Clair and the adjoining townships of St. Clair, China, and East China. According to these standards, the area currently meets the needs for total local "close to home" and regional park land both at the City and the area levels.

Table 4-2 presents a comparison of the City's park facility standards against some of NRPA's suggested park facility standards. Using these standards, the area generally appears to meet and exceed most of the suggested minimum standard for recreation facilities.



RECREATION TRENDS: 2022 TOPLINE REPORT

Recreation trends provide insight into activities that show the greatest growth in popularity and may affect the future direction of parks and recreation. The Outdoor Foundation publishes the *Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report* each year to provide a snapshot of American participation in outdoor activities, with a focus on youth and young adults. The 2022 report is based on an online survey of 18,000 Americans ages six and older. The following graphics summarize key findings from the report.

KEY FINDINGS

Participation in outdoor recreation is healthy and robust. **The outdoor recreation participant base grew 2.2% in 2021 to 164.2 million participants.**



More than half (54%) of Americans ages 6+ participated in at least one outdoor activity in 2021.

The outdoor recreation participant base grew again in 2021. The outdoor participant base has increased 6.9% since the COVID pandemic began in early 2020. Although many of the official restrictions on indoor entertainment including restaurants, bars, and sporting events ended in 2021, Outdoor recreation participation continued to grow.



The number of kids participating in outdoor recreation is up, but they are participating less frequently.

New outdoor participants are more diverse than the overall outdoor participant base and are driving increasing diversity not only by ethnicity but also across age groups.

High-frequency, or “core” participation, in outdoor recreation is declining. The outdoor recreation “core” participant, who participates 51 times or more in outdoor recreation activities annually declined from 71.9% of the total outdoor recreation participant base in 2007 to 58.7% in 2021. In fact, the number of core participants declined from 99.5 million in 2007 to 96.4 million today.

The number of participants 55 years and older increased more than 14% since 2019, and senior participants ages 65 and older were in the fastest-growing age category, with 16.9% growth since the pandemic began.



Despite increases in the number of participants, total outdoor outings are declining significantly. **Outings have been in decline for the past decade** and the increased number of participants are not stemming the tide.

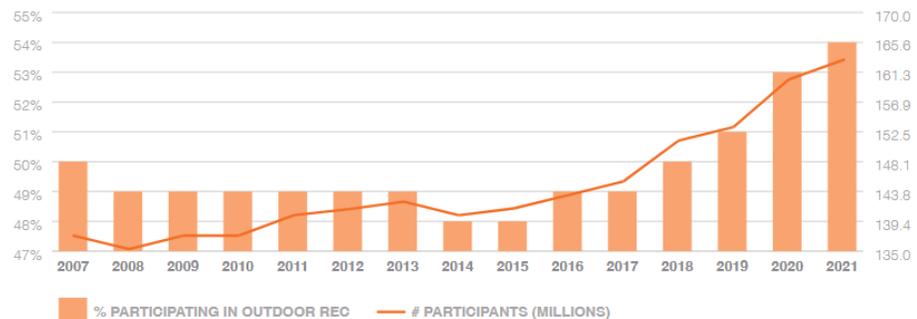
KEY FINDINGS

Since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March of 2020, the number of new and returning (lapsed) outdoor participants has increased 26%. The growth in new participants and returning participants in 2021 was the highest ever recorded.

There was a reasonable expectation that during 2021, the second year of the pandemic, outdoor participation would return to 2019 levels as indoor activity including, dining, sporting events, and fitness centers and gyms, reopened. **The 2021 data indicates that participation in outdoor recreation retained momentum in 2021. This data indicates that outdoor recreation is “sticky;” once someone begins to participate, they are likely to continue to participate.**

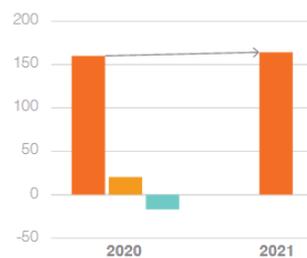
OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION GROWTH TRENDS

2007 TO 2021

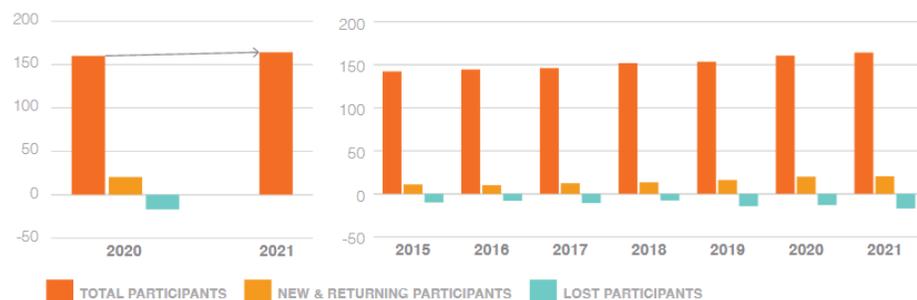


TOTAL, NEW/LAPSED, & LOST PARTICIPANTS (MILLIONS)

2021



2015 - 2021



2

Source: 2022 Outdoor Participation Trends Report, Outdoor Foundation.

INTEREST LEVEL OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Growth in outdoor recreation slowed in 2021 in many categories but gains made since 2019 were not lost. Compared to 2020, 14 categories of participation grew, two were flat, and 38 categories declined. Despite slowed growth, outdoor recreation gained a net total of 3.5 million more participants in 2021. Additionally, 6.8 million Americans, a record number, tried outdoor recreation for the first time in 2021. Survey respondents, both outdoor participants and nonparticipants, were asked to choose which of 122 team, individual, and outdoor activities they intended to participate in during the next 12 months. Outdoor activities ranked highly on that list. **Activating non-participants and retaining current ones should remain a key priority for every outdoor company and organization.**

MOST POPULAR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

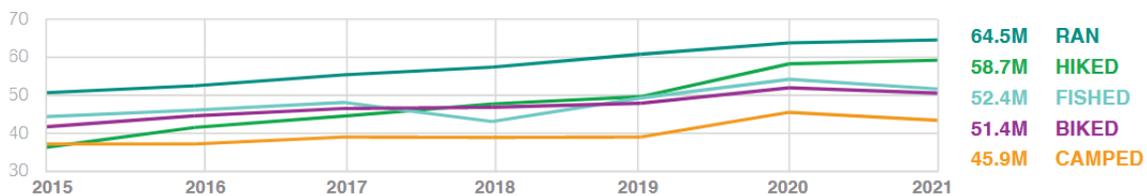
| ACTIVITY | PARTICIPANTS (MILLIONS) | CHANGE 2020 TO 2021 |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|
|  HIKING | 58.7 | +889 thousand |
|  CAMPING | 45.9 | -2 million |
|  FISHING | 52.4 | -2.3 million |
|  RUNNING | 64.5 | +739 thousand |
|  BIKING | 51.4 | -1.4 million |

LEGEND

-  CAMPING
-  BIKING
-  FISHING
-  HIKING
-  RUNNING

TOP FIVE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES (MILLIONS OF PARTICIPANTS)

2015 TO 2021



MOST POPULAR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

BY PARTICIPATION RATE

AGES 6 TO 17

| ACTIVITY | PARTICIPATION RATE | # OF PARTICIPANTS (MILLIONS) |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|
|  BIKING | 29.9% | 14.9 |
|  CAMPING | 26.2% | 13.1 |
|  FISHING | 25.6% | 12.8 |
|  RUNNING | 21.3% | 10.7 |
|  HIKING | 20.2% | 10.1 |

BY ANNUAL FREQUENCY

AGES 6 TO 17

| ACTIVITY | # OF OUTINGS | AVE ANNUAL OUTINGS PER PARTICIPANT |
|---|--------------|------------------------------------|
|  BIKING | 622,320 | 33.7 |
|  RUNNING | 497,092 | 41.2 |
|  FISHING | 170,301 | 13.9 |
|  SKATEBOARDING | 167,376 | 43.5 |
|  CAMPING | 123,831 | 9.2 |

Source: 2022 Outdoor Participation Trends Report, Outdoor Foundation.



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CHAPTER 5

GOALS & OBJECTIVES/ STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN



DRAFT



INTRODUCTION

The City of St. Clair Recreation Commission has formulated the following goals and objectives for the next five-year planning period. The goals and objectives are broad enough to encompass the needs expressed by the public, City officials, and staff, as well as respond to the observed deficiencies in the recreation resources. They also consider current demographic and economic trends and projections, the area's physical resources, and recreation trends.

PARKS AND RECREATION GOALS

The City of St. Clair is committed to providing recreational opportunities for persons of all ages and abilities.

The focus of parks and recreation in St. Clair should continue to be on the maintenance and improvement of existing parks and trails, as well as continuing to provide outstanding programming for residents and non-residents alike.

PLANNING OBJECTIVES

The Recreation Department has five overarching planning objectives to guide its strategic action program:

1. MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE EXISTING PARKS.

The continued maintenance and update of park facilities is important to the quality of parks and recreation in St. Clair. Park facilities should be safe, functional, and well-maintained. This includes upgrading aging facilities, removing barriers to accessibility, and maintaining the parks. There is also a desire to continue improving park facilities to respond to the changing needs of residents, such as renovating or relocating the City pool, renovating Klecha Park, updating Greig Park, installing permanent restrooms at City parks, and improvements at the boat harbor.

2. ESTABLISH A CONTINUOUS CITYWIDE BIKE/WALKWAY SYSTEM.

The establishment of a network of bike and walk ways to form a continuous system tying parks, schools, neighborhoods, businesses, and community facilities is a continued priority for the City. This system should be tied to the regional trail system planned for the area and to a complete streets policy for the City of St. Clair. Coordination with City Council, the Planning

Commission, and the Downtown Development Authority will be necessary to develop and implement the system.

3. ACQUIRE AND DEVELOP NEW PARKS.

Potential land acquisition and parkland dedication should focus on providing areas for active recreation use and community gathering. Coordination with City Council and the Planning Commission will be necessary to acquire new parkland.

4. CONTINUE TO IMPROVE RECREATION SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS.

The Recreation Department strives to provide quality and diverse recreation programs which respond to residents' desires and interests. The Recreation Department has maintained a high level of services that is well-appreciated by residents.

The continued coordination with area recreation providers including adjacent townships and the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission, as well as the schools, civic groups, and business organizations, is important to maximize the City's recreation potential. The Recreation Commission should play a role in the coordination of such services by focusing on increasing public awareness and support for park development projects and meeting community recreational needs for recreation programs.

The City should also encourage and participate in discussions with neighboring jurisdictions and St. Clair County on a potential regional community recreation center in an appropriate location to serve residents.

5. PROVIDE FOR THE EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING OF PARKS AND RECREATION.

The continued maintenance and update of park facilities is important to the quality of parks and recreation in St. Clair. Park facilities should be safe, functional, and well-maintained. This includes upgrading aging facilities, removing barriers to accessibility, and maintaining the parks. There is also a desire to continue improving park facilities to respond to the changing needs of residents, such as renovating or relocating the City pool, renovating Klecha Park, updating Greig Park, and improvements at other existing parks and the boat harbor.

In order to receive these funds, communities must submit an annual report and show evidence of "maintenance of effort" to assure the funding is used to expand opportunities rather than to supplant existing local funding. In effect, local units of government must document that they have maintained their local financial support for parks and recreation services at a level equal to or greater than the amount they spent prior to the 1994 millage election.



STRATEGIC ACTION PROGRAM

The Action Program details the manner in which the goals and objectives will be met. It includes a list of specific improvement projects, as well as strategies for implementation.

The following outlines a list of specific projects and strategic actions which are recommended for accomplishment during the five-year planning period. They are based on the needs identified in the community-wide survey, discussions with the project steering committee, and input from City staff and commissions.

1 Maintain and upgrade existing park facilities

This action includes replacing or repairing old equipment and facilities that are in a state of disrepair, are outdated, or dangerous. It also includes improving the appearance of the City parks through appropriate landscaping and maintenance. All upgrades must meet safety and accessibility standards. Proposed actions include:

- Remove/replace play equipment;
- Maintain safety surfaces under play structures to regulated depth and fall zone;
- Refurbish athletic field and multi-use surfaces as needed;
- Make ADA-accessibility improvements at all facilities as needed;
- Refurbish parking area, walkway, and court game pavement surfaces as needed;
- Replace/add park furnishings such as benches, trash receptacles, and signs;
- Explore the development of a field house or other shared use facility to host pickleball and other activities.
- Identify opportunities to adaptively reuse closed or underutilized facilities, such as school buildings or churches.
- Maintain buildings, structures, and picnic shelters in good condition with roof repair, exterior painting, and other improvements;
- Manage existing plant materials with the removal of dead trees and replace with tree/shrub plantings; and
- Work with the DDA, Beautification Commission, and other civic groups to continue to add attractive landscaping by park signs, park entrances, and at other locations.
- Create an inventory of invasive species at all City parks and work with community partners to manage and/or eliminate problem areas.

2 Improve Greig Park

Greig Park is the main active park in the City of St. Clair. Proposed improvements include:

- Install a permanent restroom building;
- Maintain the multi-use surfaces and replace equipment as necessary;
- Improve, reorganize, and resurface the parking area;
- Prepare a stewardship plan for the management and enhancement of the wooded area;
- Improve and maintain the nature trail; and
- Redesign the non-motorized bicycle track and add components to the skate park as needed.

3 Improve Palmer Park

Because of its primary location along the St. Clair River, Palmer Park is a high priority for future park improvements. Proposed actions include:

- Develop a master plan for Palmer Park that includes plans for signage, utilities, lighting, landscaping, and events.
- Provide a community gathering space for special events;
- Promote the park's access to the river, highlight community events at the park, and market the park's amenities, such as the bollards for boater access;
- Explore providing active and passive recreation facilities, including opportunities for outdoor fitness and physical activity;
- Promote the area's maritime history through interpretive displays and enhanced tools to enjoy the river and its variety of boating and shipping activities;
- Continue to improve and maintain safe pedestrian access from Riverview Plaza to Palmer Park, leading to the Boardwalk;
- Explore options for working with community partners to provide appropriate areas within the park for food trucks.
- Add permanent restroom facilities.
- Ensure proper and regular maintenance of the boardwalk.

4 Improve and add small parks and open spaces

Diamond Point, Patrick Sinclair, and Rotary Club parks should be maintained and improved by providing walkway connections to the citywide walkway system. Other small public open spaces could also be added on vacant or underutilized lots. Proposed actions include:

- Continue to improve and maintain the Wildlife Landing at Rotary Park;
- Create seating areas and continue to incorporate artwork along with pedestrian amenities;
- Continue to maintain and add attractive landscaping; and
- Add walkway connections to the citywide bike/walkway system.



5 Develop the Legacy Park property

Legacy Park is an important addition to the City's park system, providing ball fields for the area's baseball and softball leagues. Additional land acreage remains undeveloped. Proposed improvements include:

- Develop a master plan for the undeveloped land at Legacy Park;
- Provide nature trails and paved walkways around the park;
- Further develop the sledding hill through enhanced design and improvements, including lighting.
- Work with partners to develop a trail connecting Legacy Park to the Bridge to Bay Trail;
- Support the St. Clair Little League's development and maintenance of the existing and planned ball fields, including
 - ⇒ The addition of support facilities and park furnishings, including a picnic shelter, tables, restrooms, benches, drinking fountains, etc.;
 - ⇒ The development of playground facilities; and
 - ⇒ Making improvements to the parking and driveway areas.

6 Renovate Klecha Park

With Legacy Park housing the Little League ball fields, Klecha Park can be transformed into a neighborhood park by implementing the Klecha Park Master Plan, which includes:

- Maintain one ball field and replace the others with a multi-use court and open grass areas;
- Remove and relocate the play structure and pavilion;
- Develop a splash pad or other water feature at the park;
- Remove the storage building;
- Add walkways, seating areas, shade trees, and shrubs; and
- Develop a new parking area with ADA-parking and accessible sidewalk connections to restroom facilities.

7 Acquire parkland and open space

Work to acquire and dedicate new parkland and open spaces as significant parcels and acquisition opportunities occur.

- Acquire land for the development of parks adjacent to existing parks, providing access to the Pine and St. Clair rivers, and land that provides linkages and opportunities for both active and passive recreation; and
- Work with City Council and the Planning Commission to ensure parkland dedication is considered in development proposals.

8

Maintain high quality recreation services and provide efficient/effective administration

Financing the development of new facilities will have to be supported by grants, donations, and other funding sources. Recreation Department staff should continue to provide outstanding customer service and recreational opportunities for citizens. Recommended actions include:

- Continuously evaluate and monitor recreation programs;
- Stay abreast of current recreation trends at the regional, state, and national level;
- Ensure that City recreation programs have safe, up-to-date equipment and supplies;
- Evaluate fees and chargers for programs and services to increase cost recovery;
- Continue to pursue state and federal grants for parkland acquisition and development;
- Continue to maintain and develop volunteer opportunities;
- Expand use of web-based communication tools such as Facebook, Twitter, E-mail blasts, and other online services for registration and communication;
- Increase marketing efforts to promote the City's parks and recreation programs and ensure that all citizens are aware of City facilities, programs, and events; and
- Establish a memorial bench/tree planting program.

9

Improve the St. Clair Boat Harbor

The St. Clair Boat Harbor is an asset to the City of St. Clair and the larger region. Pleasure boating is hugely popular throughout the Metro Detroit area and the Boat Harbor provides excellent amenities for boaters looking to take advantage of the area's beautiful water resources. Recommended actions include:

- Seal and restripe the parking lot and explore reorganizing the lot configuration to increase the efficient flow of traffic and improve parking;
- Continue to improve and maintain the seawall and caps, ensuring structural and aesthetic integrity;
- Renovate and improve the restrooms;
- Increase the size of the fleet of canoes and kayaks available for rent at the Boat Harbor;
- Identify the most cost-efficient and effective treatment for dock repairs and dock replacement;
- Continue to make improvements to enhance the Harbor pavilions;
- Implement the upland Rotary Park improvements outlined in the Initial Broadside Dock Study;
- Renovate and update the Harbor office; and
- Pursue dredging grant funds as needed.



10

Actively support and participate in the continued development of bicycle and walking trails/pathways

Work with City Council, the Planning Commission, and other partners to continue developing the multi-use pathway system by developing missing links, providing connections in and outside of the City, and adding complete streets features. Proposed actions include:

- Continue to partner with MDOT, St. Clair County, Friends of the St. Clair River, and other stakeholders to promote and develop a system of non-motorized trails within St. Clair;
- Provide safe pedestrian crossings along primary arteries in conjunction with pedestrian refuges, enhanced crosswalks, pedestrian-activated signals, and other features;
- Install site amenities along the bike/walk system to include kiosks, maps, benches, trash receptacles, mile markers, bike racks, and a wayfinding system;
- Work with St. Clair County and other partners to implement recommendations and design treatments outlined in the Blue Water Trail Towns Master Plan;
- Develop a marketing strategy to attract support and sponsors including the development of a walking brochure and club;
- Encourage the creation of a U.S. Bike Route 20 alternate route through downtown St. Clair;
- Utilize St. Clair County recreation millage funds to repair and maintain pathways throughout the City;
- Work with community partners to implement the St. Clair County Trails Plan, including the connection to the Macomb Orchard Trail in Richmond along Fred Moore Highway to help complete the Great Lake-to-Lake Trail Route #1;
- Continue working with community partners on implementing the Bridge to Bay Trail wayfinding plan; and
- Develop the following pathway connections:
 - ⇒ Fred Moore Highway/King Road multi-use pathway to Legacy Park,
 - ⇒ Carney Drive to St. Clair High School,
 - ⇒ Pine River Corridor River Walk,
 - ⇒ M-29/Riverside Drive segment, and
 - ⇒ Brown Street from existing path end point to M-29.

11

Improve the City's community pool and develop a splash pad

Two important takeaways from the community survey are that residents love the community pool and wish for it to remain - whether renovated in its current location or constructed new at another location. They also have a strong desire for a splash pad to be developed somewhere in the City. Recommended actions include:

- Make improvements to the community pool at its current location or identify an appropriate location to develop a new community pool;
- Look for ways to partner with neighboring townships on a community pool;
- Establish an advisory community pool committee to explore funding and promotion; and
- Develop a splash pad at an appropriate location in an existing City park.



12 Work with community partners to further improve and promote water trails

The City of St. Clair is fortunate to be located in an area that offers phenomenal opportunities for water-based recreation and enjoyment. Paddling sports have seen enormous growth in popularity in St. Clair County due in large part to the establishment of the Blueways of St. Clair, a countywide system of water trails. With the Pine and St. Clair Rivers, there are tremendous opportunities for water trail recreation in the City. Recommended actions include:

- Continue to work with the Blueways of St. Clair to promote area water trails and increase marketing efforts for City-specific water trails;
- Identify an optimal location for an additional ADA-accessible canoe/kayak launch;
- Enhance signage for water trails, river access, and connectivity to downtown and other City amenities;
- Develop fishing and canoe/kayak access on the Pine River; and
- Implement the recommendations of the Blue Water Trail Towns Master Plan.

13 Maintain partnerships to enhance parks and recreation opportunities for citizens

Facilitate and promote the use of City parks and recreation facilities by community groups including seniors, sports leagues, and public schools. Parks and Recreation Commissioners must continue to advocate and promote the social, economic, and environmental values and benefits of parks and recreation by reaching to the community and the region. Recommended actions include:

- Stay involved in local and regional efforts to promote tourism and recreation opportunities in the City of St. Clair, St. Clair County, and the Thumb Coast.
- Continue to coordinate the shared use of facilities and programs with area sports organizations, public schools, adjacent communities, regional recreation providers, and other recreation groups;
- Explore partnership opportunities with private and nonprofit entities for key regional impact projects, such as the redevelopment of the ECSD Education Center as a potential recreation/education/arts center;
- Continue to seek public/private partnerships including adjacent communities, St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission, or private groups for the area's parks and recreation services or for implementing a particular project such as a regional community center and work with those partners to identify appropriate locations and funding opportunities; and
- Provide opportunities for volunteers and promote park stewardship opportunities.

14

Continue to maintain and promote Pine Shores Golf Course as a recreational destination

The City operates the Pine Shores Golf Course, a nine-hole course that offers lessons, league play, and banquet facilities. The community survey revealed that many residents are not aware of the various services the golf course offers.

- Maintain the clubhouse facility and improve the parking lot as necessary;
- Improve and maintain the irrigation system;
- Explore options to provide additional waterfront opportunities such as fishing, kayaking, boating or other activities at the golf course;
- Work with partners to manage invasive species and protect habitat in the Pine River;
- Look into other community uses for the parking lot across from the clubhouse; and
- Maintain and replace golf course equipment on an ongoing basis.



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

In order to accomplish the recommended actions during the next five years, it will be necessary to secure adequate funding. The current budget provides a limited amount of money for parks and recreation facilities. Therefore, the following strategies are recommended in order to proceed as planned.

APPLY FOR FEDERAL FUNDING

At the federal level, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) funds the federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). To be eligible, a project must be an eligible TAP activity and relate to surface transportation. A minimum 20% local match is required for proposed projects and applications are accepted online on an on-going basis. Additionally, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) also holds an application process, giving the City two opportunities to apply for TAP funding. Activities which may apply to the City of St. Clair include:

- Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles including new or reconstructed sidewalks, walkways, curb ramps, bike lane striping, wide paved shoulders, bike parking, off-road trails, bike and pedestrian bridges, and underpasses;
- Provision of safety and educational programs for pedestrians and bicyclists designed to encourage walking and bicycling; and
- Acquisition, planning, designing and constructing abandoned railway corridors.

APPLY FOR MDNR GRANT FUNDING

At the state level, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) offers a number of grant programs for parks and recreation acquisition and development, including the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the Recreation Passport grant program, and Michigan Spark Grants.

The MNRTF provides funding for the purchase and development of parkland for natural resource-based preservation and recreation. Grant proposals must include a local match of at least 25 percent of the total project cost. There is no minimum or maximum for acquisition projects. For development projects, the minimum funding request is \$15,000 and the maximum is \$500,000. Applications are typically due April 1 each year.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federal appropriation to the National Park Service, which distributes funds to the MDNR for development of outdoor recreation facilities. Minimum grant requests are \$30,000 and maximum requests are \$75,000. LWCF grants require a 50 percent match of the total project cost. Applications are typically due April 1 each year.

The Recreation Passport program provides grants up to \$75,000 for development projects and requires a 25 percent match. The program is focused on renovating and improving existing parks, but the development of new parks is eligible. The minimum grant request is \$7,500. Applications are typically due April 1 each year.

The Michigan Spark Grant program was created in 2022. The Spark program is a \$65 million grant program to help local communities that want to create, renovate or redevelop public opportunities for residents and visitors - especially those whose economic opportunities and health were hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Administered by the DNR, Michigan Spark Grants will

support projects that provide safe, accessible, public recreation facilities and spaces to improve people's health, introduce new recreation experiences, build on existing park infrastructure and make it easier for people to enjoy both indoor and outdoor recreation.

Other funding conducted in partnership with the MDNR is available through other state government divisions, such as the Fisheries Division (Inland Fisheries Grant) and the Forest, Mineral, and Fire Management Division (DTE Energy Foundation Tree Planting Grant and Forest Stewardship – Outreach and Education Grant). The Inland Fisheries Grant program considers projects that enhance habitat and fisheries, riparian property for public fishing use, water quality, and ecology.

APPLY FOR MICHIGAN WATERWAYS COMMISSION FUNDING

Waterways Program Grants are funded through the Michigan State Waterways Fund from state marine fuel tax and watercraft registrations. These grants provide funding assistance for design and construction of public recreational harbor/marina and boating access site/launch facilities throughout the state. Only local units of government and public universities are eligible to apply. On-site investigation by MDNR, Parks and Recreation Division staff may be required to determine suitability of proposed work. Greater priority is typically given to projects for which the applicant documents matching funds equal to or greater than the percentage of the project cost they are required to provide. The local match can include in-kind services. These grants provide funds for engineering services (i.e. preliminary design/engineering, feasibility studies, market analysis, soil borings, utility surveys, bathymetric surveys, and many more) and construction components for boating facilities (i.e. utility work, dredging, breakwater and seawall work, dock/pier work, boat launch work, paving work, fueling system work, ice suppression, lighting, entrance/parking lot work, pump-out system work, and more). Applications are typically due April 1 each year.

Additionally, the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program through the MDNR provides funding assistance for the construction of recreational boating facilities in the state that meet the following goals:

- Create dockage for transient recreational boats 26 feet or larger in order to provide access to recreational opportunities and safe harbors;
- Provide navigational aids for transient boaters using these facilities;
- Enhance access to recreational, historic, cultural, natural, and scenic resources;
- Strengthen local ties to the boating community and its economic benefits;
- Promote public/private partnerships and entrepreneurial opportunities;
- Provide continuity of public access to the water, and
- Promote awareness of transient boating opportunities.

Grant funding covers 75% of the total approved project costs for construction of infrastructure improvements. Applications for the Boating Infrastructure Grant program are also due by April 1 each year.

SEEK OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING

There are also a variety of smaller grant programs available for the establishment of greenways/pathways or greenway-related facilities. Additionally, the City of St. Clair should investigate additional sources of funding, such as donations, attracting sponsors, holding fundraising events, and exploring other revenue sources to raise funds for park acquisition and development.

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APPENDIX A

ST. CLAIR BOAT HARBOR

IMPROVEMENTS SCHEDULE, DREDGING INFORMATION, AND SITE PLAN



ST. CLAIR BOAT HARBOR: IMPROVEMENTS SCHEDULE 2023-2027

| IMPROVEMENT/PROJECT | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Dredging as required | 2023-2027 |
| Refurbish and upgrade pavilions #2 and #3. | 2023-2024 |
| New launch dock | 2023 |
| Improve boardwalk on west wall from Pine Street to Cedar Street | 2024-2025 |
| Floating docks and kayak/small boat launch south of Juliet Street | 2024-2025 |
| Reconstruct boardwalk and replace power stanchions along north wall at Rotary Park | 2024 |
| Replace water fountain with water bottle filling station | 2023 |
| Improve wi-fi and security cameras. Add coverage to include south wall and west wall | 2023-2024 |
| Relocate dumpsters, add stage/amphitheater by Campsite #1 | 2024-2025 |
| Dock decking replacement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Docks #1 and #3 • Docks #2 and #4 • Docks #5 and #6 • Long wells | 2023 2024 2025 2026 |

DREDGING AT THE HARBOR

The last dredging at St. Clair Boat Harbor was in 2011-2013 when 1,200 cubic yards were removed by Malcolm Marine Inc. This project was supported by a DNR matching grant. No dredging is required currently due to high water levels.



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